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May 1980
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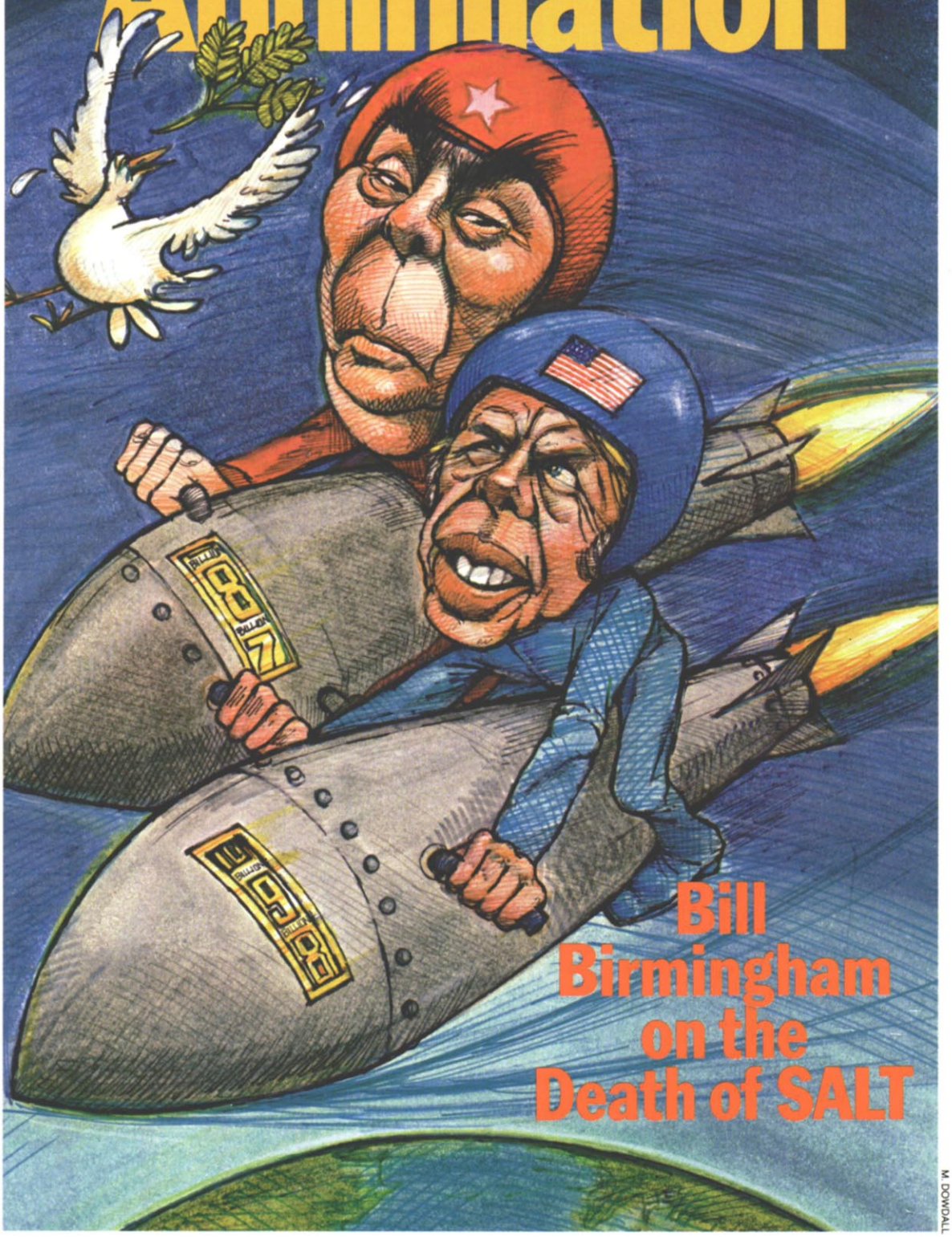
Racing Toward Annihilation



Bill Birmingham on the Death of SALT

M. DOWDALL

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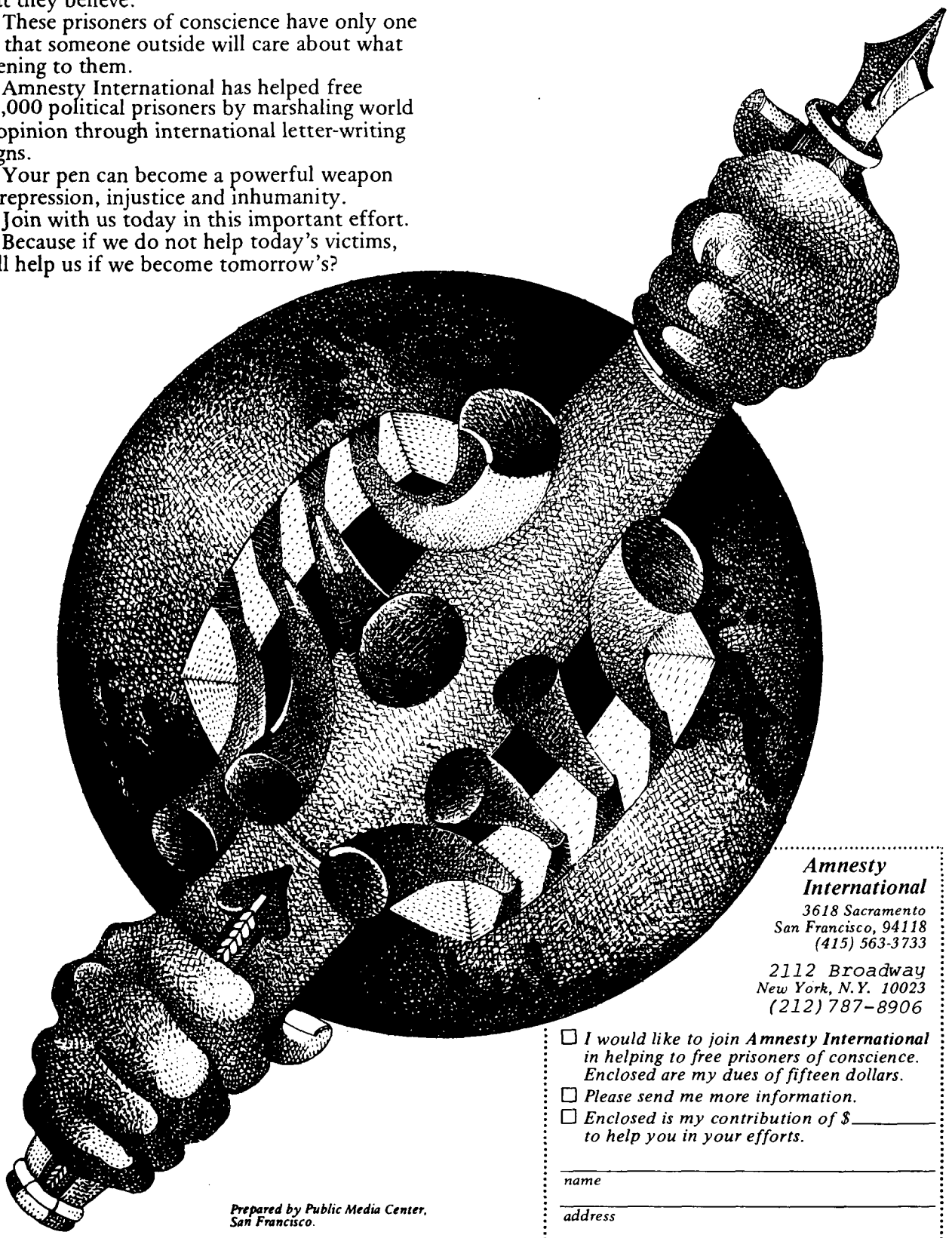

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THE LIBERTARIAN REVIEW

May 1980
Volume 9, No.5

CONTENTS

The Politics of Nuclear Overkill

by Bill Birmingham

It wasn't the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that killed Salt II; it was the American policy of using its nuclear arsenal as a political weapon. *LR* staff writer Bill Birmingham explains in his inimitable fashion.

Page ... 20

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FEATURES

How to Create a Housing Crisis 28

by Doug Bandow

While the blame for the housing shortage is being placed on vicious capitalism, the actual cause is regulation, or more specifically, the abuse of illegitimate power. A primer for bureaucrats.

DEPARTMENTS

Opening Shots 4

by Bill Birmingham

LR Editorials 6

Semantics of demagoguery; Justice in Wonderland; Of wonders never ceasing; Glenn at the gas pump; Reefer madness in the cancer ward

Letters to LR 12

The Movement 16

by Jeffrey Sanchez

The Public Trough 18

Why Gold?
by Bruce Bartlett

Books and Arts 36

Michael Lipson on *Dan Morgan's* **Merchants of Grain**
William W. Beach on *Walter Karp's* **The Politics of War**
Frederic Reynolds on *Samuel R. Delany's* **Tales of Neveryon**
David Brudnoy on *Albert Lattuada's* **Stay As You Are,**
Paul Schrader's **American Gigolo** and *Billy Friedkin's* **Cruising.**

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OPENING SHOTS

BILL BIRMINGHAM

CONGRESS SHALL MAKE no law respecting an establishment of religion, says the First Amendment, but saccharine piety seems to be an unofficial requirement for the Chief Executive—as Wee Jimmy Carter reminded us at the National Prayer Breakfast on February 7. "Every day I pray for the Ayatollah Khomeini," he intoned, as well as for the Iranians holding the U.S. embassy in Teheran and even for the hostages themselves. (After that, no doubt, he can threaten to vaporize the hostages—and Khomeini and indeed the entire world—in pursuit of reelection, with a clear conscience.) "It's not easy to do this," simpered the Blessed Peanut, "and I have to force myself sometimes to include someone on my list because I don't want to acknowledge that that person might be worthy of my love." Indeed. For example, we don't think that the Ayatollah is worthy of Jimmy's love. He hasn't been *that* bad.

If they're so rich why ain't they smart? Saudi Arabia has hired Mr. Billy R. Stokes to design its rapid transit system, fresh from his San Francisco fiasco: Bay Area Rapid Transit, which is more than twice as expensive as buses—and barely half as reliable.

In the western United States lie the so-called "tight sands": geological formations that hold vast amounts of natural gas—perhaps as much as 200 trillion cubic feet, equal in size to all the U.S. proved conventional gas reserves—trapped in tightly cemented sand. The gas is almost impossible to extract until the sands that trap it are fractured, a difficult and expensive task. For many years the Atomic Energy Commission contemplated using underground nuclear explosions for this purpose (the tests, thankfully, were never successful). But according to the *Christian Science Monitor* (February 26, 1980), the gas has now been released by an even more powerful force: the free market. Thanks to a recent ruling allowing higher prices, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that the tight sands could be producing 600 billion cubic feet of gas a year by 1985.

The reader may find some consolation in a report from the Congressional Budget Office which suggests that inflation isn't really as bad as the Consumer Price Index would have it. True, the CPI increases at a double-digit rate, but a big chunk of that — 4.6 percentage points in 1979—is the rising cost of home ownership. Since mortgage interest payments are tax-deductible, says the CBO, "probably not much more than half of this represents an increase in the cost of living for most people." But thanks to "escalator clauses" that link Federal wages and benefits to the CPI, those flawed "inflation" figures cost the taxpayers almost $5-billion in the last two years.... At the other end of the inflationary process, the Federal Reserve System, which creates inflation by increasing the money supply, has decided to redefine money. A popular new "aggregate" (as they are called) is M-1B—cash, demand deposits and checking/savings account hybrids—which just happens to be growing at a rate deemed acceptable by the Fed. (Only a cynic would think that that's why the Fed invented M-1B.) Meanwhile, Fed Chairman Paul Volcker recently went before Congress to complain that more and more banks are withdrawing from the Federal Reserve System. Fed members now hold only 70 percent of overall bank deposits; if this trend continues it may "seriously disrupt" the Fed's control over the money supply ... whatever it is.

As if sheep were to form a coalition to build more slaughterhouses, three "youth organizations" have announced a coalition to support draft registration. The College Democrats of America, the National Federation of Young Republicans, and the Young Social Democrats of America held a press conference on February 21 proclaiming "a pro-registration consensus" in their organizations. And why not? Quite aside from the fact that many of these bonzen are too old for registration (one may remain a "young Republican" until senility, for example) it is entirely in their interest to encourage American youth to obey their rulers, since they aspire to join the ruling class themselves. To put it more succinctly, what we have here is not a coalition of sheep supporting slaughterhouses, but a coalition of Judas goats.

"Kuwait's foreign minister yesterday attacked President Carter's plan for an American security umbrella over the Persian Gulf, saying the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan poses no threat to Arab oil. 'We do not need anyone saving us,' he said" (*San Francisco Chronicle,* February 19, 1980). Talk about your ingrates.

In the week before the New Hampshire Primary, Wretched Ronald Reagan declared himself "totally against" legalizing marijuana, claiming it "could well turn out to be the most dangerous drug that is in use in our country today." We'd rank it as second-most-dangerous, at worst; certainly far below orange hair-dye,

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or whatever caused Ronnie to ask: "Why don't we blockade Cuba, which is a satellite of the Soviet Union, until they remove their troops from Afghanistan?" As the *Nation* suggested, "Reagan should return to his ranch for a rest and contemplate less extreme anti-Communist sanctions. How about something more appropriate to a retired actor —boycotting Polish ham?"

When most everybody seems to have enlisted in the Great Jihad against Moscow, it's refreshing to hear Andrew Kopkind give "One-and-a-half (Strangled) Cheers for the USSR" (*Village Voice,* February 4, 1980). "The global game," Kopkind points out, "is played by a set of rules established years ago: The U.S. gets the dictators and the ruling classes and the Soviet Union gets the masses and the revolutionary movements." The U.S. helps the dictators keep the masses in subjection; the masses must turn to the Soviets for help if they wish to escape. Kopkind argues, not without justification, that without Soviet assistance (real or potential) "hardly a single war of colonial liberation or social revolution would have succeeded in these [past] three decades. ... They all paid a heavy price for that help. But anyone whose sympathies lie with the enemies of American intervention in Vietnam, Portuguese and South African exploitation of Angola, the Batista/ Mafia tyranny in Cuba, and even the feudal tradition in China must acknowledge the USSR's historic help." I think Kopkind both underestimates the price of that help and overestimates its importance, but it's nice to hear, for once, a defense of interventionism based on revolutionary rather than reactionary premises: reminiscent of fellow libertarian Karl Hess's opinion that if we had to get involved in Vietnam, it should have been on the side of the Viet Cong.

Orwell lives: According to *Aviation Week and Space Technology,* the Pentagon makes arms sales programs and calls them peace. Sales of F-15 fighter planes to Israel are called Peace Fox, F-4s to Egypt are Peace Farrow (sic), and F-15s are sold to Japan under the name Peace Eagle.

Would you believe an American ambassador who never heard of Islam, or the "gang of four," or even that there are two governments in Korea? Our man in Singapore, former South Dakota governor Richard Kniep, is just such an ignoramus, says *Newsweek*. The *Foreign Service Journal* first exposed these buffooneries, attributing them to an anonymous "Ambassador X," who was also given to inviting friends in to watch top secret embassy work, and once sent his houseboy to tour an American warship as his stand-in. The State Department was not displeased; one spokesman told *Newsweek:* "We have confidence in the manner in which the U.S. mission in Singapore is being managed." Maybe Libyan strongman Muammar el-Qaddafi was onto something last January, when he called on Americans in Libya to seize their embassy and turn it into a "people's office."

Social Darwinism is at work along the Rio Grande. Large numbers of car, truck and bus operators who bought cheap diesel fuel from Pemex, the Mexican state oil monopoly, have found it no bargain. It seems that Pemex left an important additive out of one batch of oil, and as a result those who filled their tanks with socialized fuel had their engines clogged with paraffin, necessitating $90 to $150 repair jobs. The supposed glories of Pemex, by the way, have long been a major exhibit in the case for FOGCO, the proposed Federal Oil and Gas Corporation.

Senator Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.) has released a report which calls peacetime draft registration "redundant and unnecessary." According to this report, the Selective Service System could defer registration until such time as a draft was actually "necessary" (that is, after mobilization) and still get more than enough warm bodies; moreover, such an approach "employs the fewest number of full-time personnel and costs the least." The marvelous part is, this report was prepared not by Hatfield's office but by the Selective Service System itself, and was suppressed by the White House. A popular new antidraft slogan, we hear, is "Hell no, we won't go! We won't die for Texaco!" The sainted Joe Hill was more to the point: "Yes, I'll pick up a gun ... but I won't guarantee which way I'll point it."

In 1978, according to a report by economist Ruth Lager Sivard, global arms sales totaled $120-billion, an amount greater than the gross national product of all but ten countries and equal to that of Spain. Measured in pounds per person, the world has more explosive power than food. ❑

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EDITORIALS

Semantics of demagoguery

SENATOR S.I. HAYAkawa of California is best known today for his extraordinary talent — some might even call it a genius — at sleeping. The junior Senator from the Golden State has been known to nod off on the floor of Congress, during committee meetings on Capitol Hill — even, it is said by some, while attending high-level conferences at the White House.

Yet the Senator has not always been famous mainly for his lapses into unconsciousness. Only a decade ago, his name was a household word for a different reason altogether — because of his decision that San Francisco State University, of which he was then president, must be turned into an armed camp in order to fend off the menace posed there by student demonstrators. And only a decade before that, he was nationally famous as the foremost popularizer of the General Semantics of the Polish mathematician and philosopher Alfred Korzybski. The Senator-to-be was then editor of *Etc.*, the international journal of General Semantics, and author of a book called *Language in Thought and Action,* which was used all over the country as a text in high school and college English courses.

It is instructive to reexamine *Language in Thought and Action* now that its author is once again publicly voicing his admiration for armed camps. If one turns to page ix of the Preface to the 1963 edition, for example, one finds the following:

> The original version of this book, *Language in Action,* published in 1941, was in many respects a response to the dangers of propaganda, especially as exemplified in Adolf Hitler's success in persuading millions to share his maniacal and destructive views. It was the writer's conviction then, as it remains now, that everyone needs to have a habitually critical attitude toward language — his own as well as that of others — both for the sake of his personal well-being and for his adequate functioning as a citizen. Hitler is gone, but if the majority of our fellow-citizens are more susceptible to the slogans of fear and race hatred than to those of peaceful accommodation and mutual respect among human beings, our political liberties remain at the mercy of any eloquent and unscrupulous demagogue.

Let us take Senator Hayakawa's advice. Let us adopt a critical attitude toward language — specifically, toward the language the Senator himself used early in March when he called for "internment" of all Iranian nationals now living in the United States. "After what's happened," he told reporters on March 12 following the breakdown of the United Nations investigation of the hostage stalemate in Teheran, "we have every reason to declare a state of belligerency and round up all non-citizen Iranians and put them in relocation centers." The Senator was even good enough to specify how the "internment" was to be carried out: "the way we did the Japanese during World War II," he said; "we interned 110,000 Japanese during World War II and we managed that all right."

As it happens, there are around 110,000 Iranians in the United States at the moment too (some estimates place it higher, nearer 200,000); and numbers isn't the only characteristic they share with the Japanese and Japanese-American victims to whom Senator Hayakawa so cavalierly compares them. They also share the characteristic of unpopularity. Nancy Kramer and James A. Goodman of the Committee for Public Justice, a national civil liberties organization, reported in late February that Iranians have fallen badly out of favor with the American people: "Not since World War II — when President Franklin Roosevelt ordered the internment of 110,000

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Japanese-Americans and resident aliens—have Americans been so hostile to a foreign nationality among them as they are to the 200,000 Iranians now living in the U.S." A month later, when Senator Hayakawa proposed consigning these Iranians to the same fate suffered nearly forty years ago by the Japanese, the response of his constituents, according to his press secretary, Janice Barbieri, was 2-1 in favor of the proposal.

Yet what was it that was done to the 110,000 Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II? What were the realities which lay behind the almost meaninglessly general words—"internment," "relocation centers" — and which lie behind them today when those same generalities are trotted out again for application to Iranians? One historian of the program Senator Hayakawa remembers so fondly, James J. Martin, writes of the process of "internment" as the process by which the American Japanese were "expelled from their homes, stripped of all but their most simple belongings [stripped, in fact, of more than $200 million worth—$800 million worth in 1980 dollars — of their rightful property], and herded into ten bleak concentration camps from the California desert to Arkansas." Martin describes the "relocation centers" as not only "bleak," but also "miserable," located in "a sun-roasted and sandstorm-assaulted nightmare-nowhere," and administered by bureaucrats and military people who "could easily have made the transition to similar employment in Germany or Russia." At least 70,000 of the 110,000 people imprisoned in these places were American citizens. Yet they were held against their will for up to five years without any charges ever being filed against them, without ever being tried in a court of law — without, in fact, being guilty of anything at all. They were held behind barbed wire, watched night and day by armed military personnel. And they lived with the knowledge, as one former prisoner, J.J. Enomoto (now director of the California Department of Corrections), puts it, "that if anyone tried to escape they would be shot. In a real sense you were an inmate. The term 'concentration camp' is not inappropriate."

Clearly, however, the term "relocation center" *is* inappropriate, and especially in the public remarks of a man who advises us to "have a habitually critical attitude toward language." It is much more than inappropriate, however, to propose that such an iniquity be revisited upon yet another hapless minority. From an American of Japanese ancestry, such a proposal is almost unbelievably insensitive. From a U.S. Senator, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, at a time of international tension when irresponsible talk of conscription and war is already dishearteningly commonplace, it is inexcusable. It is, in the strictest sense of the word, the proposal of a demagogue — an unprincipled politician who panders to the worst prejudices of the mob.

Senator Hayakawa—and those Americans to whom his maniacal and destructive Iranian proposal (since watered down to apply only to Iranian diplomats) seems reasonable or even worth momentary serious consideration—would do well to ponder the wording of a plaque erected last year by the state of California on the site of one of its World War II concentration camps, the one at Tule Lake, near the Oregon border. "These camps," the plaque reads in part, "are reminders of how racism, economic and political exploitation, and expediency can undermine the Constitutional guarantees of United States citizens and aliens alike. May the injustices and humiliation suffered here never recur."

—JR

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Justice in Wonderland

DOUBLEDAY & CO. IS suing one of its authors, Gwen Davis, to recover the libel damages which a California court required the publishing house to pay to a psychologist because a character in the novel *Touching* resembled him. Writers' organizations, such as The Authors League and American P.E.N., have protested Doubleday's action, as violating the traditionally friendly relationship between author and publisher, in which publishers have often lost money rather than sue authors for undelivered manuscripts or other violations of contract. (Ms. Davis had signed a standard contract which included a clause indemnifying Doubleday against any libel suit, but had been assured that the clause was "boilerplate" which was never invoked.)

The real danger to writers, however, lies not in the action of Doubleday but in the decision of the original libel case of *Bindrim* v. *Mitchell,* refused review by the U.S. Supreme Court last December. Paul Bindrim, Ph.D., a California-based licensed psychologist who practices nude encounter group therapy, sued Gwen Davis Mitchell for libel, claiming that a character in her novel, Dr. Simon Herford (an M.D.), was both "recognizably" a portrait of him *and* an inaccurate representation. He proved that the character was a portrait of him by the testimony of three witnesses, all of whom had participated in or observed one of Bindrim's nude marathons and claimed to recognize his technique. Bindrim, however, is not the only practitioner of this technique.

A dissenting opinion in the California Court of Appeals by presiding judge

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Gordon L. Files described the situation this way. "Defendant's novel describes a fictitious therapist who is conspicuously different from plaintiff in name, physical appearance, age, personality,and profession. Indeed the fictitious Dr. Herford has none of the characteristics of plaintiff except that Dr. Herford practices nude encounter therapy." Nevertheless, surprisingly, Dr. Bindrim won his suit.

Surprisingly, because the way in which novelists generally work is to take some characteristics of people whom they have known and ask themselves questions like, "What would happen if a person like this became a murderer?" Or, "Suppose a person in this situation tried to exploit other people. What might happen then?" Ms. Davis admittedly attended one of Dr. Bindrim's nude marathon sessions. She even signed an agreement promising not to write about what happened there: an agreement that the courts later held to be invalid, stating that "a professional person cannot, by contract or otherwise, prevent one of his patients from reporting the treatment that he received." Obviously, she assumed that if she made changes in the character of the therapist and juxtaposed a fictitious plot and fictitious incidents, she would be avoiding libel charges by living up to the novelist's traditional disclaimer, "Any resemblance to persons living or dead is purely coincidental." She may have been concerned, however, lest her portrait of the therapy session be so close to the truth as to leave her vulnerable to a breach of contract suit.

But in a truly Alice-in-Wonderland decision, the California Court of Appeals held that the fact that Ms. Davis had been there and had even used verbatim some of the dialogue which she had tape recorded was perfectly admissible, as a "report" on the treatment she had received. Her additional fictional incidents, however, were libelous because they were false. Her character used obscene language, which Dr. Bindrim had not, at least not in the recorded session. The nude encounter depicted in the book had a tragic effect on one of the participants, but no tragedies resulted from the session which Ms. Davis attended.

Further, although the opinion of the Court of Appeals said, "There is no suggestion that Mitchell [Ms. Davis's married name] was being malicious in the fabrication: her intent may have been to be colorful or dramatic," the court sustained a finding that "Mitchell entertained actual malice," in the technical sense of a "reckless disregard for the truth," precisely because she knew the true facts of what went on at the marathon and then changed some of them. As the dissenting opinion of Judge Files points out, "The majority opinion adopts the position that actual malice may be inferred from the fact that the book was 'false.' That inference is permissible against a defendant who has purported to state the truth. But when the publication purports to be fiction, it is absurd to infer malice because the fiction is false."

In fact, what we have here is a double bind. To quote Judge Files again, "Plaintiff's brief discusses the

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therapeutic practices of the fictitious Dr. Herford in two categories: Those practices which are similar to plaintiff's technique are classified as identifying. Those which are unlike plaintiff's are called libelous because they are false. Plaintiff has thus resurrected the spurious logic which Professor Kalven found in the position of the plaintiff in *New York Times* v. *Sullivan* ... 'There is revealed here a new technique by which defamation might be endlessly manufactured. First it is argued that, contrary to all appearances, a statement referred to the plaintiff; then, that it falsely ascribed to the plaintiff something that he did not do, which should be rather easy to prove about a statement that did not refer to plaintiff in the first place.'"

The decision is really terrible news for writers of fiction. It says that the First Amendment protects nonfiction, as "reports," and totally accurate transcriptions of people's actions, even in the context of a work which is otherwise fictitious, but does not protect fiction as such. *Alice in Wonderland* was a work of fiction which purported to place a real little girl, an acquaintance of Lewis Caroll's, in a fantastic country. By the standard of *Bindrim,* to the extent that it was fantastic, it was a malicious libel. Perhaps an even better example is Ayn Rand's novel, *The Fountainhead.* A number of readers (including the late Frank Lloyd Wright himself) thought that the main character, Howard Roark, was based upon the architect, Frank Lloyd Wright. But Frank Lloyd Wright never dynamited a housing project which he had secretly designed, as Howard Roark is depicted as doing. Should he have sued Ayn Rand for libel? According to the decision in *Bindrim,* he would probably have won.

—JKT

Of wonders never ceasing

FROM PEKING COMES word—in the *People's Daily,* the *Pravda* of the Communist Chinese government—that inheritance rights are good rights. In the paper's own words: "Inheritance rights are in the interests of hard work and thrift, the encouragement of savings, residential construction in rural areas and the acquisition of funds and investments from overseas Chinese."

Well, that *is* news. Inheritance rights had been on the outs in new Peking for many years, especially during the period of chaos known politely as the Cultural Revolution. Chairperson Mao Tse-tung (or Mao Zedong, as we are now supposed to write it) had no use for property rights, as, apparently, for any other nasty old reactionary rights, and so inheritable property during the Chairperson's long rule was frozen or else turned over to the regime.

The *People's Daily,* whose motto in effect is All the News That Fits the Party Line We Print, says also that inheritances lighten the burden of families supporting elderly people and disabled people. "This is the responsibility of families as society for a long time cannot completely shoulder the cost."

This news item received a modicum of attention in the Western press when it appeared in China in late January, and a bit more here and there in February, but it seems not to have awakened much sustained interest.

I would therefore remind our readers that China has also seen fit—and not all that long ago—to uphold that right of creators of ideas put into print which we call "copyright." This, too, signaled something to the world, though it was also largely ignored by commentators. The Chinese then (in 1978, I believe) were reversing another long-held view of property rights in general. The right to hold onto thoughts when printed, the copyright, is merely a type of property right. The Chinese were saying, in effect, that there is something to be gained, even in a communist state, from allowing those who produce literature and published opinion to profit from the dissemination of that literature and opinion. The Chinese acknowledged in their turn-about on copyright that they had erred up to that point by ignoring international copyright agreements and simply pirating anything they wanted from the rest of the world. Whether the change of view has actually led to a complete change in practice, I don't know; we learn of developments in the new, new China slowly, slowly.

But coupling these two developments leads to a broad thought about present-day Chinese communist theory—not, be warned, the thought that the Chinese leaders are throwing in the towel on communism. Rather, that they are gingerly edging away from some of the more purist elements in Mao-thought.

In these two steps the Chinese communist leadership is saying that not everything in China belongs to everybody collectively, that an individual person's printed ideas, even if those ideas come from the capitalist-roading West, are not the State's to scoop up without recompense; and that at least some of what a person, or a family, accrues over the years may properly be passed down to that person's or family's heirs. Initiative is the word that binds these two decisions, or official opinions, together. Initiative, as defenders of capitalism, the free marketers, never tire of saying, is what leads to improvement. Get-up-and-go, we say in America. Gumption, they say out in the west. Greed, they may call it still in the communist countries. But whatever it is called, it boils down to this:

Mankind is motivated by, among other things, a strong desire for material gain. People will work horrendous hours to better their economic lot, they will whip their poor brains into frenzies dreaming up new ways to say things and do things and sell things and promote things and employ things, partly at least because there is profit to be had from such labors. People will scrimp and save, as the cliche goes, will put off gratification for a very long time, in order to bring advantages to their children that they themselves never had. They will leave their possessions more readily to those they know intimately and love than to those they know theoretically and are conditioned to love (The People). As Calvin Coolidge said: There is no civilization without profits. Perhaps the Chinese communists are beginning to see that light.

—DB

"Mankind is motivated by a strong desire for material gain. As Calvin Coolidge said: There is no civilization without profits. Perhaps the Chinese communists are beginning to see that light."

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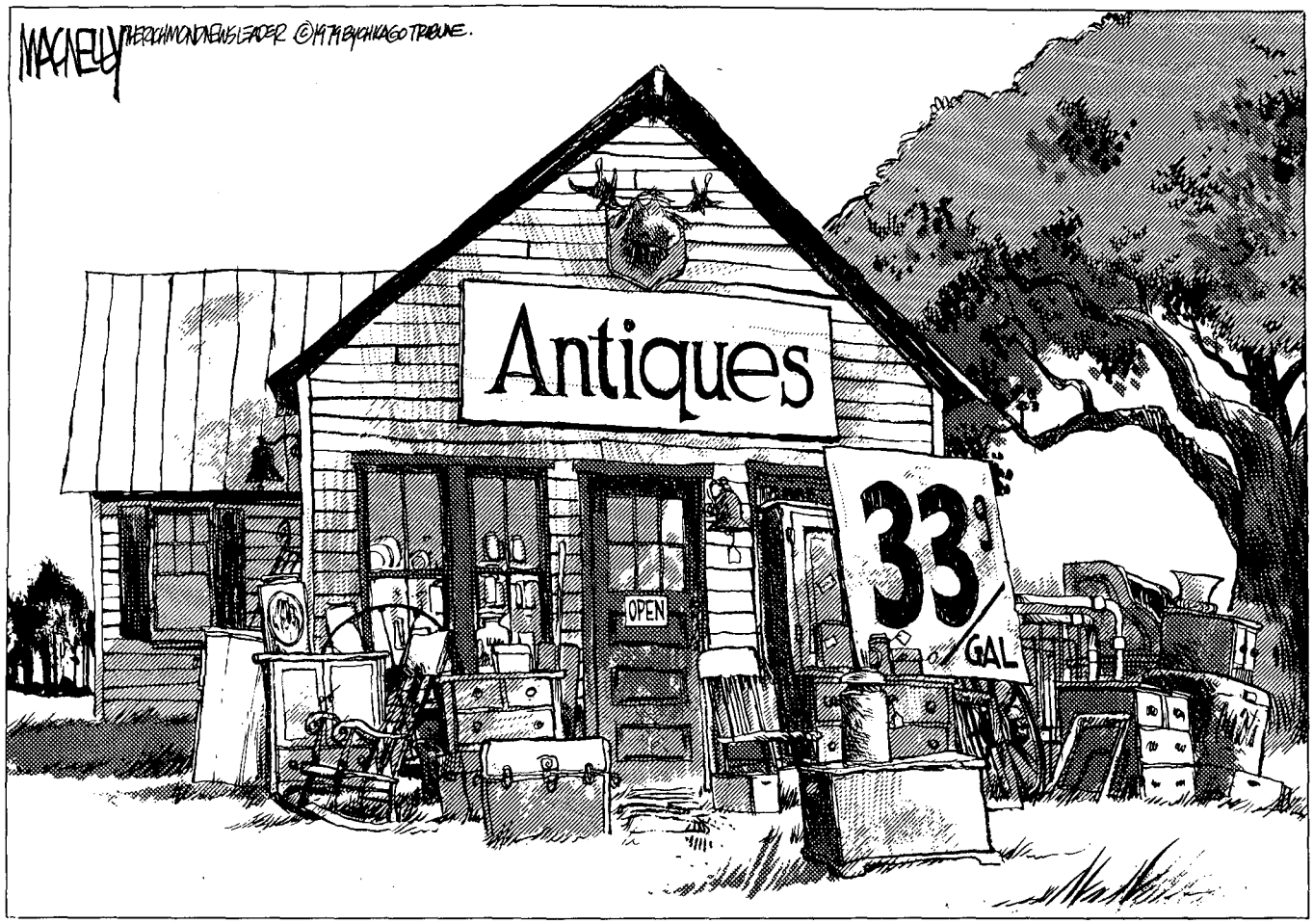

Glenn at the gas pump

THE INFAMOUS PRICE gouger Glenn Heller came before the courts and went away sentenced to thirty days in the pokey and fined $9450. The Republic is safe again, rescued from the knave of the gas pump.

Let's start at the beginning. Last spring Mr. Glenn Heller, who operates a tiny Gulf station tucked into a corner at the foot of Beacon Hill, Boston, began charging more for his gasoline than other dealers charged — more, in fact, than Uncle Sam allows. Heller became an overnight media sensation during the summer gas crunch. He was excoriated nightly on the talk shows and harassed daily by the newspapers and TV stations. He became, in the public imagination, a sharp-talking greedy monster. The first paragraph, above, more or less paraphrases the attitude of much of the media, which was crowing about Heller's conviction early in February.

There is, of course, another side to the story. Heller provided a service very few other gas stations provided: he stayed open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Which meant that when his allocation of gasoline, so generously allowed by the Department of Energy, ran out—as it would have run out by midday at the prices charged elsewhere — he would have had to close. Many, perhaps most, gas stations in America did just that.

Ah, but Glenn Heller thought that having his station open in the wee hours was an advantage to the citizenry, for which advantage the citizenry would, naturally, have to pay. The location of Heller's gas station is not the most pacific in town; in fact it's become a rather dangerous spot. One can't run a gas station like that with one lone gas pumper, subject to robberies. One has, in fact, to provide security. And one must, if one is to pay employees at night and pay the rent, charge more for gas than competitors charge; else the gas will run out early in the day.

Now Glenn Heller was charging $1.56.9 a gallon when the Feds busted him. No one was obliged to buy his gas; no one was dragged unwillingly into his station; in fact, hundreds of customers each week were fortunate to find Heller's station open, when all the rest were closed. Slice it anyway you like, there's no way to conjure up the image of Glenn Heller as a bad guy, *making* folks buy his gasoline. Many's the time, last summer, before, and since, that I've needed gasoline and at 3 a.m. only Glenn Heller could provide it.

But the Department of Energy allows only a fixed profit per gallon of gas sold. This doesn't take into account rents, salaries, and other costs. Might there be something of a conspiracy going on? If not, why is the retail gasoline business the only business so regulated in America today?

"No one was obliged to buy his gas; no one was dragged unwillingly into the station. There's no way to conjure up the image of Glen Heller as the bad guy, making people buy his gasoline."

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Glenn Heller, whose case continues on appeal, believes that the big oil companies and the DOE are in this together. The argument isn't ironclad, but as evidence he offers some interesting statistics. During 1979, a little more than ten percent of America's retail gasoline stations went out of business: 170,624 in January, 153,200 in December. Why are these stations going out of business? The profits simply aren't there. The gas stations are watching their fixed costs skyrocket—Heller's rent, to Gulf Oil, went up from $300 monthly a few years back to $1200 monthly now. Moreover, the big oil companies evidently prefer to see small gas station operators leave the business. Why? For that, we turn to the Lundberg Letter, a weekly newsletter heavily relied on by gas station retailers.

"It's good economics for a marketer to sell his curtailed gasoline supplies through fewer outlets. A chain of 100 stations with a total allocation of five million gallons a month would be averaging 50,000 gallons per station. If the chain shut down 25 stations, it would be averaging 67,000 gallons per station. Thus while the throughput of most single-station retailers has declined during the gasoline shortage, the average throughput of many multiple-station retailers has increased. This trend makes economic sense for the industry, but not necessarily for the individual station retailer." (Lundberg Letter, Vol. 7, #11, January 11, 1980.)

Heller is fighting both big oil and big government. The matter requires more refinement, more analysis, more thought. But in his squabble with DOE, Glenn Heller is a little David fighting Goliath. He may have imagined a conspiracy, but he's right on target seeing Big Brother as the enemy.

—DB

Guest Editorial

Reefer madness in the cancer ward

THE MARIJUANA CONtroversy is one of the dullest, stalest, and least important in our public life. But a marijuana cigarette will suppress the nausea and vomiting which accompanies chemotherapy treatment. Pot acts this way in nine cases out of ten. And this is no minor blessing. Cancer patients on chemotherapy have been known to prefer the disease to its treatment, so horrible are the side effects from the drugs: vomiting every half-hour, twenty-four hours a day, for weeks at a time. Torture. And a single marijuana cigarette stops it.

That's why laws in twenty-one states have been changed to permit cancer patients to use marijuana. The Federal government's record is not so good: it still refuses to hear of marijuana smoking for any purpose. So vomit your hearts out, you sickies! Too many jobs and drug enforcement programs are at stake to permit even this step, because it might lead to legalization and a lot of government payrollers having to find honest work.

Marijuana for cancer patients also brings up the question of cocaine and heroin for cancer patients. Perish the thought! It's one thing for society to so arrange its corrupt, maladministered self to make sure that the rich have plenty of cocaine at their discotheques and the poor have heroin in their ghettos. But heaven forfend that the afflicted and painwracked should have some in their hospital wards.

I for one have come close to hoping that those who deprive dying sufferers of this sweet solace will get the same treatment on *their* deathbeds. ❑

—Nicholas von Hoffman

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LETTERS TO LR

On meddling in foreign affairs

BRUCE BARTLETT'S ARticle, "Five Percent for What?" in the December issue of *The Libertarian Review,* echoes what I've been saying for fifty years, more or less. I was born in 1901. From the time of Woodrow Wilson on, I watched the growth of our meddlesome foreign policy, and now the chickens have truly come home to roost. As a metallurgical engineer I was, of course, automatically a member of the "Military-Industrial Complex." And for forty years or more, I've been saying that we could get much better, real defense, at one tenth the cost. And, like you, I've often said that if we didn't we would most assuredly be defeated. And for the same reasons you give.

Now the important thing, Mr. Bartlett, is for all of us to keep working through the Libertarian Party. I'm sure we have the perfect program and the perfect candidates. So let us never become bogged down in petty squabbling or nit picking or long, boresome academic expositions; but go to work with simple dedication and elect our candidates. We can do it if we really want to.

JOHN E. ERB
Northville, NY

CHICAGO TRIBUNE/NEW YORK NEWS SYNDICATE

To boycott or not to boycott

I GUESS I ALSO VIEW the Nestlé boycott with mixed emotions: baby bottle disease is like sin, everyone's "agin" it. And, as Jeff Riggenbach argues [*LR,* December] a boycott is a market solution to fighting what one finds reprehensible without violating the rights of others.

Still, I have reservations. The complaints didn't surface when our *government* foreign aid gave powdered milk in CARE packages; only when a private (or semiprivate) company sells food for profit does one hear the outrage. What money is there in killing your customers? Furthermore, Nestlé didn't *poison* the water the mothers use to prepare the formulas, and I'm not sure that they can be properly identified with bad sanitation. Do we hold a drug manufacturer responsible if, similarly, one dies after taking a drug and drinking alcohol? How can Nestlé be responsible if mothers, say, dilute the formulas and don't refrigerate them? I see no evidence of Nestlé having committed either force or fraud in offering their products for sale to people whose native foods and malnourished mothers may not be able to offer a viable alternative, anyway. Criticism is easy; moral, rational solutions are difficult.

Maybe we don't have enough information. If *LR* is looking for a subject for investigative reporting, the Nestlé controversy begs for attention.

WILLIAM L. TRUMBO
Janesville, WI

FOR THE 21 YEARS THAT I lived in the Philippines, it was very much a fact of life that if you wanted to avoid getting cholera, you boiled tap water before drinking it. Out of sheer laziness, I sometimes didn't, and *I* had cold *running* water. I didn't have a refrigerator either, for about a year. Does this mean that I should have been prevented from buying instant coffee because I didn't always boil my water and couldn't keep my milk fresh, and at that, by some foreign do-gooders?

A lot of people in the Philippines live in slums where they don't have running water at all. And it is true that infant formula is often stretched for financial reasons. But most people there don't have the luxury to switch to infant formula merely due to advertising: if they do, it's an economic or physical necessity, and perhaps, for convenience.

As Roy Childs pointed out, there is no clear alternative. Most women in the East have help at home who can be taught how to use the formula properly. It is, however, insulting to imply that they cannot decide this for themselves. Perhaps a focus on the more positive aspect of finding private means to educate parents and household help—not governments—is one solution. But I think it is wrong to advocate stopping the supply from reaching that country at all.

CHRISTINE DORFFI
Goleta, CA

Riggenbach replies:

MR. TRUMBO IS QUITE right in calling for investiga-

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tive journalism in the Nestlé case, as he is quite right in stressing the very reservations I expressed myself in my original editorial on the boycott. But when he asks, "What money is there in killing your customers? " he forgets the particulars of the case under discussion. If a firm markets a product which may easily be misused and which, when misused, can be extremely dangerous, or even deadly; if the firm capitalizes on the public outcry which develops after misuse, injury and death have become widespread, and uses this public indignation as a pretext for demanding government action to eliminate the conditions which made the product unsafe in the first place; and if the firm succeeds in arousing government to such action—*then* there may be a significant profit to be made in the long run by killing a few of your customers in the short run. The profit is having government create a viable market for you where there hadn't previously been one. As I pointed out in my editorial, Nestlé has taken precisely this course of action.

In reply to Ms. Dorffi, I can only suggest that she reread my editorial. Having done so myself, I am unable to find any proposals in it that anyone be "prevented from buying" baby formula or that anyone involve himself in "stopping the supply from reaching" anyone else. What I am able to find in the editorial is a modest proposal that those sharing a certain specifiable set of libertarian-humanitarian values attempt to persuade the Nestlé company not to continue certain of its marketing practices.

Tax funds for abortion?

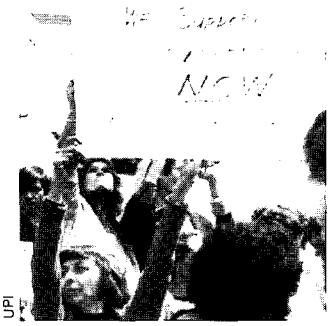
WE APPRECIATE THE generally favorable description of the ALF panel in the *LR* coverage of the LP convention [*LR*, November] but but we want to point out that the description of our editorial on government-financed abortion is distorted and misleading. First of all, we did not *denounce* Clark and Hunscher. Their opposition to government interference with abortion is highly commendable. What we objected to was their eagerness to emphasize their opposition to government-financed abortions *out of context*, i.e., without pointing out that it is merely part of a *whole system* of welfare that should someday be eliminated in favor of private alternatives.

Drawing attention to their opposition to this particular kind of welfare and, especially, calling it a "high priority tax cut" (as Clark did), implies that government-financed abortions are *worse* than other forms of welfare. Few libertarians would agree with *that*. Certainly not most libertarian feminists.

As Peter Breggin pointed out in his excellent article in the same issue, "we must make clear that in addition to good theories and to good principles, we have good intentions, especially toward the disadvantaged," and "that programs to help the disadvantaged will not be the first programs to be cut." We who signed the editorial simply believe that fewer "macho flash" cliches and more thoughtfully worded positions would demonstrate our good intentions.

SHARON PRESLEY
National Coordinator
Association of
Libertarian Feminists
New York, NY

Abortion: what is a human being?



JUST A BRIEF STATEment to continue the unresolved debate about "Abortion and choice." There will never be a resolution to the question as long as each participant argues dogmatically and adamantly. It has become a matter of "you can't prove me to be wrong!"

Well, considering the present state of the art, neither can either side *prove* itself to be *right*. Hence, let me present a new point of view — at least an undeveloped view.

Leslee J. Newman's September article, the letters in response, and her reply (December *LR*) all beg the real question. That is, when is the fetus human, or developed enough to be more than potential? At what phase of embryonic development does this event occur?

No one, according to the standards currently used for determining the existence of humanity, whether the prolifers, the pro-choicers (Pro Abortionists), the Supreme Court, ad infinitum — no one can determine when. Hence, no one—at least no truth-seeking, truth-respecting libertarian (among others)—can freely take *any* action regarding abortion, secure that the action is constructive. Let us consider an analogy. A hunter aims his rifle at what he *thinks* is game but is not sure. If he fires, he is willing to kill the target. If it is a man, then the hunter commits homicide. Is it murder or an accident? Think about it.

If there *is human life* at the moment of conception (zygote formation) then the "pro-lifers" are right. Abortion would *be aggression* against a human life. If the "pro-choicers" are right that human life is present only at the time of viability outside the mother's womb, namely six months (more or less)—it isn't exact is it?—if extra-uterine viability counts, then the "pro-choicers" are right, and abortion would *not be aggression* against a human life.

But when exactly does viability occur? That is the question, folks, that is *the question!*

The time of "quickening" cannot be determined if viability, the capability of self-sustained life outside the womb, is utilized as the standard. Why not? Because it is not an exact measure. Besides, there is always the necessity of extraordinary life support systems to sustain a six months newborn; sometimes, nay often, those systems are even necessary for full term newborns. Hence, those newborns are not actually *viable*.

Further, consider the fact that the fetus, just one week, one day, one hour, one minute before the umbilical cord is cut, is more capable of nourishing itself than the newborn child. Proof? Have you ever seen a newborn prepare its own bottle? But *is* there a measure to determine "quickening"? I think so.

Currently among physicians and lawyers and theologians — and most courts —brain activity is the sign of life. Brain death has become the indicator of death. We can also apply brain activity —or evidence—as a sign of life in a fetus. And the embryological facts are that the brain and central nervous system is operational before any other organ systems are

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even formed. In fact, the nervous system and its inherent neurotransmitter chemicals are directly involved in the development and maturation process. Furthermore, even before the central nervous system is organized, there is clear evidence of organized activity in the first stage of embryonic growth.

The conclusion I reach is that there is evidence—incontrovertible evidence—that an individual human life is in existence at the moment of conception.

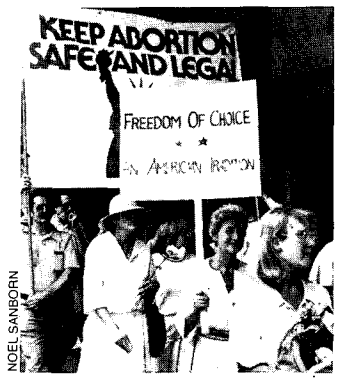
If you disagree, show me evidence of the *absence* of humanity—the absence of genuine self-nourishing humanity—in that mass of cells. An active brain in an otherwise incompetent non-self-sustaining body is in far worse condition.

If still you cannot agree with me, at least withhold pulling the trigger on that fetus—that blastula; it, like the hunter's target, may very well *be* a human being.

JOHN C. MORRIS M.D.
Newberry, MI

DESPITE MUCH DISCUSsion of this topic, there is still quite a lot of confusion on just what abortion is and why it is wrong to act to prevent someone who has chosen to obtain one, or to enact laws prohibiting them whenever freely chosen by a pregnant woman.

The issue, mind you, isn't whether abortion is right or wrong—there is no general answer to this question. It depends on the context of the individual(s) involved. The issue is whether, in preventing the birth of a child, a pregnant woman and those freely assisting her are engaged in wrongful homicide, murder, or some variety of immoral killing of a human being. But this requires that some clear and sound idea of what it is to be a human being be available, otherwise why stop with regarding human fetuses as candidates for murder? Surely at some stages of development embryos and fetuses of other animals closely enough resemble a human embryo or fetus, so that without clearer criteria, killing such animal embryos or fetuses could also be regarded as murder. But murder is the wrongful killing of *human* beings.



NOEL SANBORN

What makes a being a human individual is that it has the capacity to begin to use its conceptual faculty, a capacity which to the best of our knowledge presupposes a biological nature. A rational animal, then, is what a human being is. This does not mean *about to be* a rational animal, or *almost* a rational animal, or *nearly* a rational animal, or *potentially* a rational animal, and so forth. It does mean anything from an infant rational animal to an old rational animal, which is why wrongful killing of children is murder, contrary to what some contemporary philosophers, who depend largely on legal and linguistic conventions, would argue. An infant is *actually* capable of engaging in (some minimal levels of) conceptual thought, however difficult this may be to notice because of our general association of such thought with fairly complex levels of abstraction.

There is also the issue of borderline cases, or instances where by virtue of technological intervention some fetus late in pregnancy could simply be changed into an infant human being. This is a problem in any area where classification occurs, but here it is a matter of human life or death under some circumstances. For this reason it makes very good sense to subject late abortions to the due process provision that to abort a fetus in the late stages of pregnancy, it must be shown that no human being will be killed in the process. Such abortions could involve murder; so erecting objective safeguards so that this not happen is fully justifiable in a free society. The same can be said about euthanasia, which is why preparing declarations or wills concerning whether one may be treated as dead when, e.g., one's brain has died, makes good sense.

But beyond this sort of safeguarding procedure, there is no justification for intervening with freely undertaken and invited abortions. Sure, embryos and fetuses look very human, as do the embryos and fetuses of monkeys, rats, and even field mice. Whenever someone in a free society has good reason to think that abortion is actually wrongful killing of human life, the onus of proof is on the accuser to show that this is the case. Beyond the institutional safeguards, erected for the periods of very late pregnancy—to be determined contextually as technology develops—there is no justification at all for anyone coming into the picture forcefully, coercively, when a mother-to-be or parents-to-be choose not to follow through with their prospects. One can still claim that they ought to, quite correctly in some cases, but no one may do anything to make that happen.

TIBOR R. MACHAN
Santa Barbara, CA

YOUR ABORTION CORrespondence mentions everything from whales to Nazis and slights the real issue in this and other social controversies: responsibility. Many of us in the Men's Rights Movement oppose abortion (except as medical necessity or perhaps in case of rape) as a barrier to women's liberation.

Early muscle-powered technologies required sexual division of labor. To compensate the prestige and wealth rewarding men, women were granted chivalry and exemption from jobs most of them couldn't handle. The Industrial and Electronics Revolutions developed new energy sources and created immense numbers of jobs that did not require great physical strength, a situation constantly exploited by governments and their panderers.

Just as legislatures—composed mostly of lawyers—delay legalizing marijuana because anti-pot laws generate legal fees, they use this situation. By loosening divorce regulations while enacting such anti-male legislation as "wife-rape" laws, interfering with informal living together, creating national agencies to put men who can't pay support or hire attorneys in debtor's prison, forcing preferential seniority and public financing of women's organizations, lawyers help themselves and the State, but not women.

These actions undermine women's autonomy and burden taxpayers. Women come to view divorce as a means to unearned wealth and an "independence" financed by alimony and child support. Attributed to mysterious "sociological" causes beyond the ken of all but alleged experts, this debacle is supposedly dealt with by State agencies. The family, an obstacle to collectivist totalitarianism, is undermined. To legally change things requires litigation and political action that further enriches lawyers and, like as not, would result

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in more bigoted decisions that would perpetuate the same hideous dialectic.

Abortion's place is clear. Fetuses whose mothers can't get enough welfare and whose fathers are missing or intractable can still be made to yield a profit by being killed.

"Control of one's body" doesn't mean having the State compel lovers, husbands, parents, or doctors to control it any more than hating it justifies destroying the First Amendment because some magazines publish nude pictures. The problem is that most so called Feminists don't want responsible adult status, but rather the adolescent right to choose either adult behavior or traditional dependent behavior on the basis of personal, situational expediency.

Nobody has the right to kill another human save in self-defense or as a result of that person's having been found guilty of a capital crime by due process, wherever that person may be located, and a woman's egg becomes a separate member of genus *Homo,* species *sapiens,* upon fertilization.

A responsible adult woman knows she's equipped for pregnancy and that unless she's celibate, only by mechanical or chemical intervention can she consciously control reproduction. She agrees with sex partners beforehand on contraception and consequences, so men deceived into impregnating her retain paternal rights but optional responsibilities. Husbands should be able to have paternity tests done on their wives' children and unless they agree to support other men's offspring they shouldn't be forced to. Similarly, in the absence of a contract, divorced non-custodial parents should automatically retain some control over an ex-spouse's lifestyle and behavior.

To say women shouldn't have to spoil romance by planning is to use the pseudo-Feminist hypocrisy cited earlier.

Thanks to State exploitation of social change—with the complicity of those only pretending to seek freedom—all men face similar dilemmas upon becoming lovers and fathers, most women simply trade masters, and unborn children are at the mercy of their mother's whims.

If we are to be equal and to respect the sanctity of life, we must all either submit utterly to authority or women must be willing to bear the consequences of their behavior and their own decisions and no longer foist responsibility off on men or the government.

DAVID G. MORROW
Arlington, TX

Newman replies:

AS DR. MORRIS SO ELoquently states, no one can determine when the fetus becomes a human being. Yet one knows that a fetus in the first trimester of pregnancy is much less like a human being than a fetus close to term. Tibor Machan's letter counters Dr. Morris's arguments beautifully, and reflects many of my own sentiments.

According to Dr. Morris, even a single cell is capable of neurological functions, but so are the cells of other living creatures. It is not until that cell has divided and grouped itself with thousands and millions of others that conceptual thought, as Machan argues, can begin.

Mr. Morrow's response is a combination of strange ideas, distortions, and male backlash. For example, his statement that "women come to view divorce as a means to unearned wealth and independence financed by alimony and child support" is simply not true in most cases. The poorest segment of the American populace consists of single mothers, unmarried *and divorced.* The women who even succeed in collecting child support have a smaller and smaller chance to collect that support as the months pass after the court award. Furthermore, alimony, especially in states where no-fault divorce has been instituted, is becoming unheard of on a permanent basis for young, child-bearing women. So much for fetuses "yielding a profit"; yet think of the loss of profit which results from unwanted babies. Think of the destruction of dreams, and lost opportunity to make a living for pregnant teenage girls, and even for married older women who want a second chance to pursue a goal or career.

The sentiment expressed in Mr. Morrow's letter is simply that women must take the responsibility for becoming pregnant. In this respect, I must also comment on his statement that "in the absence of a contract, divorced non-custodial parents should automatically retain some control over an ex-spouse's lifestyle and behavior." If a man doesn't have to take any responsibility for a woman's pregnancy, then why should he have the right to monitor her behavior?

"If we are to be equal" men *and* women must bear the pleasure or burden of children, wanted and unwanted. But no matter who bears or shares this responsibility, we must preserve the freedom to choose whether to bear a fetus to term or to abort it. ❑

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THE MOVEMENT

New West featured the Libertarian Party in an article titled "The Next American Revolution." (August 27, 1979)

JEFFREY SANCHEZ

IT APPEARS THAT ESTABLISHED magazines are beginning to take the Libertarian Party seriously. While occasional articles on the LP have been popping up for years, it now seems to have made the leap from being a curiosity to being a movement to be reckoned with.

Four magazines — *Chic, Oui, Saturday Review* and *TWA Ambassador* — have recently done profiles of the LP. And while the writers of these articles aren't always either informed or sympathetic, it is promising to know that millions of Americans will be reading about us.

All four articles include a sampling of libertarian ideas, brief interviews with libertarian personalities, and an account of last fall's national convention. It is instructive to look at each article more closely.

"Party Time" by Mark Christensen in the February 1980 issue of *Oui* offers a light and amusing view of the LP. As with most articles on libertarianism, this one begins with cataloguing of the seemingly contradictory elements in libertarianism: the "leftist" ideas like noninterventionism in foreign policy, decriminalization of victimless "crimes" and opposition to the draft, and the "right-wing" causes such as dismantling state and federal regulatory agencies and reducing or ending all taxes.

Christensen briefly interviews Murray Rothbard and Ed Crane, but spends most of his time discussing libertarianism with the LP's 1972 Vice-Presidential candidate, Tonie Nathan. Unfortunately his questions betray his lack of background in libertarian theory and his understanding of libertarians is superficial.

Despite these shortcomings, Christensen does seem to understand the appeal the LP can have for the public: he writes, "Libertarians offer an attractive political package. A classless (though certainly not egalitarian) America where, unrestrained by the shackles of smothering government, everyone gets a chance. It's a promise of power for the powerless, possessions for the dispossessed. A pure and apparently consistent ideology for an impure and chaotic world."

Most libertarians probably wouldn't describe their ideology in that fashion, but I don't think such a description will do us any harm.

John A. Jenkins's "Free Thinkers" in *TWA Ambassador's* March 1980 issue is a balanced and informed account of both the LP national convention and several libertarian figures. Jenkins has done his homework on libertarianism's ideological roots and has taken the time to interview many prominent libertarians.

Many party members will be dismayed at the space Jenkins has devoted to party infighting but his presentation of the LP as a diverse group with internal differences gives an accurate impression of the Party as a vibrant, growing organization. Commenting on the delegates' refusal to change their votes so that Clark's presidential nomination could be offically "unanimous," Jenkins says, "Leave the phony party harmony to the 'Demopublicans': individualism is the Libertarian way."

These themes of individuality and diversity are reiterated throughout the article. Two well known libertarian activists are quoted on just this issue. Former LP national chair Ed Crane explains, "It's very hard to point to a person and say, 'That is a typical libertarian.' We're iconoclastic." And LP founder David Nolan complements this view when he says, "Essentially we're a coalition of nay-sayers and repeal groups. We don't want to be drafted, taxed,

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zoned, regulated, harassed, spied on, or anything else. We just want to live our lives in peace and freedom."

But what kind of political movement can arise from such intense individualism? Jenkins himself had arrived at the national convention "expecting that the chaotic Libertarian combination of nonconformists, anarchists and 'off-our-back' capitalists undoubtedly will mean a very *unconventional* convention." But he soon found out that Libertarians can produce "an adroitly staged political event." Jenkins's description of the convention certainly belies the usual amateurish image the public holds of minor political parties.

Michael Nelson, a Vanderbilt University political science instructor, has offered his view of the LP, "The New Libertarians," in the March 1, 1980 issue of the *Saturday Review*. Nelson is the least sympathetic of the writers considered here. While his brief history of the LP's progress and his profiles of libertarian leaders are evenhanded and (for the most part) accurate, his understanding of libertarian theory and its place in America today is very superficial. It is unfortunate that Nelson shows so little perception in his view of libertarians. One expects more of someone whose profession is teaching political science.

Nelson appears to have grasped the entirety of his knowledge of libertarian theory by reading no more than a few pages from Murray Rothbard's *For A New Liberty*. He obviously hasn't taken the time to read Rothbard and other libertarian writers more extensively. Thus he badly misrepresents libertarian solutions to many current social problems. He is dismayed that libertarians seem to rely on a court system for many of their solutions. "If it seems that almost everything in a Libertarian society would end up being fought out by lawyers," he laments, "it's because it would."

Nelson makes little mention of all the problems libertarians wish to solve by letting the free market function. He deliberately chooses issues that justifiably belong in a court system (such as force or fraud) and from these makes his case that virtually *all* issues would be settled in this fashion. He cynically concludes his article by saying that libertarian society "may be a lawyer's vision of utopia, but I doubt that it is shared by very many of the people who may end up voting Libertarian this year."

Nelson's own explanation of the growing popularity of libertarianism is that it is "so much in harmony with the 'me decade,' which did not end with the new year." This may be so, but the impression one gets by reading Nelson is that libertarianism is merely a trendy preoccupation that may soon go the way of the hula hoop. I think he'll be proved wrong.

By far the weakest recent article on libertarians is in the April 1980 *Chic*, "Libertarians" by Michele Willens. By and large the article is a gossipy account of internal conflicts within the LP. No analysis of libertarian thinking is even ventured. Worse yet, Ms. Willens manages to get a few things downright wrong. In describing libertarian opposition to government interference in individuals' lives, Willens says, "A Libertarian asks what his country can do for him." We do? I think that's news to all of us.

Willens also quotes *LR* Editor Roy Childs as saying, "Put the working class on notice that we mean to change the course of history." The original quote, taken from Childs's keynote address at the national convention, read instead, "Put the *governing* class on notice ..." The difference between the two quotes is significant, and such carelessness on Willen's part is inexcusable.

The overall tone of the article, however, is friendly to the LP and should arouse the curiosity of *Chic's* readers.

There are still millions of Americans to whom the Libertarian Party is virtually unknown. The exposure we've received from these magazines is a healthy sign that soon our relative obscurity will be a thing of the past.

And while popular magazines are covering libertarians, how are we faring with newspapers and the electronic media? So far the coverage is minor. This lack of coverage caused nationally syndicated columnist Nicholas Von Hoffman to lodge a complaint in the *Washington Post* February 21st.

"When Libertarian candidates aren't being treated as psychiatric specimens," Von Hoffman writes, "these urgent opponents of big government and dedicated advocates of personal civic and economic liberty are treated as human interest items, one-shot personality profiles who get done during a lull in the campaign so that the newspaper or television station can say, 'Oh, we pay attention to every candidate, no matter how loony or quaint.'"

Von Hoffman obviously believes libertarian ideas should be heard, especially Ed Clark's foreign policy stance. He makes an important point for his readers when he writes, "Libertarians see what conservatives always avoid confronting in their thinking, namely that a world-girdling or 'interventionist foreign policy,' as Clark calls it, demands a strong centralized government here at home — a domestic interventionist policy."

Such important ideas may not be reaching the public just yet and Von Hoffman himself is doubtful about the prospects of this occuring. He explains, "Between Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter, there is scarcely a hair's difference. The real debate is between them and Ed Clark, but will we ever hear it?"

The kind of political analysis Von Hoffman offers here is all too rare, but we can hope that as the 1980 presidential campaign progresses all of the news media will understand that the Libertarian Party is not a passing and amusing anomaly but representative of a forceful ideology with genuine popular support. ❑

COMING SOON IN LR

Marshall E. Schwartz on California's Jarvis II

Peter R. Breggin, M.D. on Children's Rights

Jeff Riggenbach on The Age of Aquarius

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PUBLIC TROUGH

Why gold?

BRUCE BARTLETT

LAST JANUARY'S ANnouncement that the Consumer Price Index was rising at the rate of 18 percent per year created something of a panic atmosphere in Washington. Long-time liberals began talking about slashing the federal budget while hard-core conservatives gave serious consideration to wage and price controls. The situation seemed so critical that no anti-inflation program was automatically dismissed by anyone, no matter how far-fetched it may have seemed. There was even serious talk about reinstitution of the gold standard, the bane of politicians and academic economists for more than 50 years.

Although inflation is the major reason why former sceptics are giving gold another look, there are also other important factors at work. One is a growing frustration with the volatility of floating exchange rates, which make it extremely difficult to transact international business. Second is the steep increase in the price of gold in recent months to well over $600 per ounce. At a stroke, this price increase has removed the major argument which has always been used against gold convertibility: that there isn't enough of it. At $600 per ounce the U.S. gold stock is worth $158 billion—enough to redeem every federal reserve note in existence and have plenty left over.

Another important factor is that those who advocate a return to gold convertibility are becoming more sophisticated. No longer do they argue that there is some mys-

The bills pictured here are: a) today's eroded dollars, b) D. B. Cooper's loot, c) funny money, d) all of the above.

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tical, magical quality about gold which requires its use as money. Instead they argue that gold simply has certain qualities which make it ideal for use as money. The most important of these are that gold has met the market test of wide acceptability and that its quantity is limited. In other words, as Professor Arthur Laffer puts it, "The absolute quantity of gold and its value are outside the purview of monetary authorities and their purely political decisions. Tying a currency to a gold standard has the same effect on inflation that putting a governor on a car has on speeding. Fuel is restricted."

In academia the most important contribution to the new respectability of gold is the publication of Professor Roy Jastram's book, *The Golden Constant* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977). As Jastram points out, under the classical gold standard in Great Britain the general price level was the same in 1930 as it was in 1718. "The importance of all this," as Jude Wanniski has written in the *Wall Street Journal,* "is to remind us that price inflation is not part of the human condition, but is rather a gift of modern economics."

One also reads "pro-gold" articles in a number of unlikely places these days: *The New Republic* (January 19, 1980), *The Atlantic Monthly* (January 1980), *Harper's* (March 1980), *The Times* of London (December 12, 1979), *New York Magazine* (February 4, 1980), and in reports by the investment companies of Bear Stearns (September 21, 1979) and Morgan Stanley (January 29, 1980). The *Wall Street Journal* remains the major advocate of gold, having recently published important articles on the subject by Roy Jastram (September 20, 1979) and Lewis Lehrman (February 20, 1980). And, as has been noted, this wide publicity has even caused Washington politicians to examine the possibilities of gold in the present inflationary crisis.

When the crisis is examined thoroughly politicians will discover that the gold standard brings with it enormous benefits almost immediately. As Lewis Lehrman points out, true monetary reform based on gold convertibility would result in such developments as the following: "The price of gold would fall to its equilibrium level, emptied of a value based on inflationary expectations. The price level would stabilize rapidly. Long term interest rates would fall 700-800 basis points. At lower interest rates there would be a vast demand for investment capital. With a stable price level, a stable dollar, and lower relative tax rates the sluicegates would open and a flood of savings would flow into the market. Equity and debt capital would once again pour into business enterprise. The nation's productive plant would be rebuilt. Therefore the demand for labor would rise. Unemployment would decline."

For these reasons, some of Ronald Reagan's advisors, such as Richard Whalen and Jack Kemp, have urged him to make gold an issue in the presidential campaign. Reagan has thus far not done so, having been persuaded for the time being by Milton Friedman and others to stick with more conventional anti-inflation approaches. But whether or not the politicians say or do anything about it, reestablishment of a *de facto* gold standard is already coming along well. The market is doing it for us. The only danger is that politicians will erect barriers to this development. This is the reason why gold must become an issue once again. ❑

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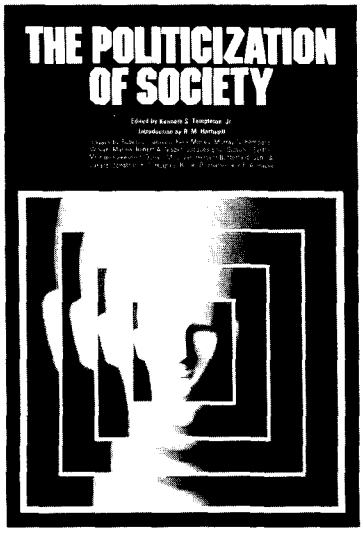

The Politicization of Society

Edited by Kenneth S. Templeton, Jr.

"The state has increasingly replaced the church in determining how we should behave," writes Oxford professor R. M. Hartwell in his introduction. "Politics is now religion." Fourteen scholars examine the central problem of modern society—the growth of the state—and its significance for the individual. They are Robert L. Carneiro, Felix Morley, Murray N. Rothbard, William Marina, Robert A. Nisbet, Jacques Ellul, Giovanni Sartori, Michael Oakeshott, Donald M. Dozer, Herbert Butterfield, John A. Lukacs, Jonathan R. T. Hughes, Butler D. Shaffer, and F. A. Hayek. Hardcover $10.00, Paperback $4.50.

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SALT II and the Politics of NUCLEAR OVERKILL

BILL BIRMINGHAM

On January 3, President Carter sent a letter to Senate majority leader Robert Byrd, asking him to delay Senate consideration of the SALT II treaty. Carter, who only last October had called ratification of the nuclear arms control treaty his Administration's number one foreign policy objective, told Byrd the Afghanistan crisis made it "inappropriate" to debate the treaty just then. A White House official put it in the vernacular: given the current war hysteria, it was "just not practical" to seek ratification; the 67 votes required simply weren't there.

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Actually they were probably never there in the first place. "Informal polls of uncommitted senators," said the *New York Times,* "indicated even before the crises in Iran and Afghanistan that there was a serious possibility the treaty might be defeated." The Soviets seem to have thought things were even worse than that. Last fall Berkeley political scientist Alan Wolfe had occasion to talk with Georgi Arbatov, director of Moscow's Institute for American and Canadian Affairs. "Arbatov," Wolfe wrote in the November 24, 1978, *Nation,* "dismissed the subject of SALT II; in his view, it would fail to be ratified and, even if approved, would not constitute an advance in Russian-American relations." One can see how Dr. Arbatov might draw that conclusion. The ink on the SALT treaty was barely dry before Carter discovered the Cuban "crisis" (remember it?) and went into a frenzy over the Soviet "combat brigade" there; issuing absurd "ultimatums" and doubtless bewildering the Russians, who can be forgiven for wondering why the American President should make such a fuss over a few thousand soldiers who—as Carter was later forced to admit—had been in Cuba for seventeen years without bothering anybody.

Then there were the increases in military spending. More F-15 fighter planes for the Air Force; a new, "stretched" version of the FB-111 bomber; production of components for the "neutron bomb"; $2 billion more for "Civil Defense," and the MX and Trident II nuclear missiles. Carter approved them all. He also embraced a real spending increase of 4.8 percent that even its proponents—as LR's own Bruce Bartlett showed in our December issue—don't know how to spend. After that, even such hard-core "doves" as Senators George McGovern, Mark Hatfield and William Proxmire were heard to say that perhaps SALT II wasn't worth the price.

There was also the matter of "linkage": the popular term for the ritual in which some Senator or another declares that, while yielding to none in his devotion to arms control, he cannot possibly support SALT unless the Soviets do thus and so on some other matter, generally quite unrelated to SALT. Even before the treaty was signed, Senators Henry Jackson and Howard Baker made their approval contingent on the release of Soviet dissident Anatoly Scharansky, to show, in Baker's words, that the U.S. can't be "pushed around." Carter denounced linkage, of course, but in 1978 he himself attempted to link SALT to the Cubans in Ethiopia; and Idaho Senator Frank Church, who had been considered one of SALT's staunchest supporters, declared that he couldn't vote for ratification until the "combat brigade" left Cuba. And of course, as Senator Baker taunted, by withdrawing SALT II over the Afghanistan invasion, Carter has "embraced linkage in a lavish way."

But the last straw may well have been the NATO decision to produce nuclear missiles capable of striking the Soviet Union from bases in Western Europe (see the LR editorial, "Misguided missiles," February 1980). The Soviets, for obvious reasons, took the NATO proposal very seriously. When the NATO ministers—prodded by Carter and his need to appear "tough" and "decisive"—voted to authorize production of the missiles, they very likely destroyed any inclination the Russians may have had to keep their troops out of Afghanistan for the sake of SALT II.

Shortly after the Soviet invasion, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski declared—correctly—that "SALT is not a favor to the Soviet Union." The United States, however, has always acted as if it were. The reason is simple: SALT — indeed, arms control in general — contradicts the basic premises of this country's interventionist foreign policy. When it is deemed necessary to force a change in Soviet behavior in Afghanistan, or Cuba, or Africa—or even in Soviet domestic policy—arms control can and must go by the board. Pious protestations that the Soviet invasion "makes it more difficult to judge the treaty on its own merits," as Senator Church put it, are beside the point.

In the first place SALT *could* be considered on its merits, *if* the Administration didn't insist on controlling events in Afghanistan and elsewhere beyond U.S. borders—which is to say, if it were willing to scrap the very foundation of interventionism. In the second place, Carter has also, without fanfare, ordered the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency "to defer all arms control efforts" in such fields as conventional forces, nuclear testing, and chemical and anti-satellite warfare—clear proof that he considers arms control just another means of controlling world affairs.

So the SALT II treaty is dead, at least for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless the Carter Administration professes to hope for a glorious resurrection. Just when that will be is unclear; surely not until Jimmy is safely reelected and/or has milked every drop of political benefit to be had from his new-found *machismo*. The Soviet Union may not have given up on SALT forever either. Last September the *Los Angeles Times* quoted an anonymous Soviet official: "Most people [in the USSR] see the detente process as inevitable, so even if SALT is rejected, detente might get back on the track in 10 or 15 years."

Of course that presupposes that we will still be here in 10 or 15 years. In his State of the Union speech, January 22, Carter took *macho* posturing to new heights (or depths) with his pledge to send American troops, if necessary, to "protect" Iranian oil from the Russians. As long-time readers of *LR* know, the U.S. has been hinting for years that it might be willing to fight the Arabs for oil (Editor Roy A. Childs, Jr. dissected the notion in our special July/August 1979 issue on "Energy and American Foreign Policy") but this appears to be the first time an American President has committed us to fight the Russians. Naturally the White House sent up a trial balloon first: the January 19, 1980, *Los Angeles Times* found various "White House and other national security officials" contemplating war with Russia. "Such a war, officials believe, would almost certainly become a nuclear war...."

The strategy of deterrence

In theory, the United States would never start a nuclear war. The United States would only use strategic nuclear weapons to retaliate for a Soviet nuclear attack on the U.S., or perhaps on certain of our allies. In that event U.S. strategy calls for the United States to use its missiles and bombers to inflict *unacceptable damage* on the Soviet Union, "unacceptable damage" sometimes being defined as *assured destruction:* enough damage to destroy the Soviet Union as a world power. Rather than be destroyed, it is presumed that the Soviet Union would refrain from launching a nuclear attack. Thus it is that America's nuclear weapons are said to act as a deterrent to a Soviet attack. Deterrent and defense are not at all the same thing, of course; if the Soviet Union, through accident or miscalculation, should start a nuclear war, her forces, too, would inflict "unacceptable damage" on the United States. The two countries are

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therefore said to have the capability of *mutual assured destruction* (MAD). So long as each country can inflict unacceptable damage on its rival, deterrence is said to be stable, and, in theory, there will be no nuclear war. Of course, there are still accidents and miscalculations....

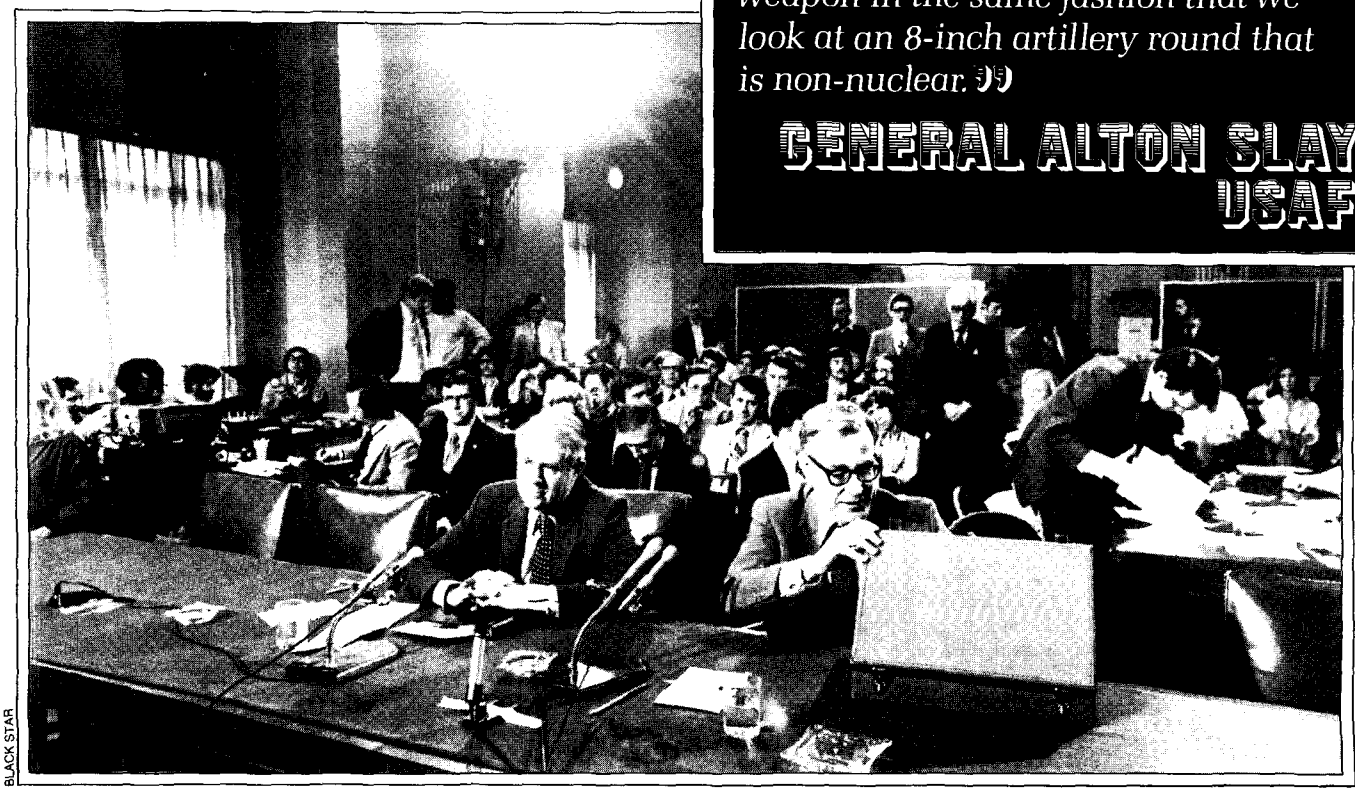
MAD was the creature of Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, who also defined "assured destruction." In the 1960s, his team of experts concluded that the Soviet Union could be destroyed as a world power by destroying more than 50 percent of its industry and from 20 to 25 percent of its population. (The industry, as one can see, is the more important component.) From that the team calculated the smallest amount of firepower sufficient to do the job (the so-called minimal deterrent): 400 equivalent megatons—400 EMT. (The equivalent megatonnage of a nuclear weapon is the nominal megatonnage—explosive power measured in millions of tons of TNT — raised to the two-thirds power, a measure which allows for the fact that eight one-megaton weapons are twice as destructive as one eight-megaton device.) 400 EMT, they concluded, would wipe out 75 percent of Soviet industry and kill 30 percent of the population. (More recently these figures have been adjusted to 70 and 35 percent.) Many more Russians would die from fires, fallout, starvation and the general privation following a nuclear exchange—conditions of which it has been truly said that the survivors would envy the dead. Beyond 400 EMT, moreover, one reaches the point of diminishing returns: 1600 EMT would destroy only a little more of the Russian industrial system and not much more of the population.

Using the McNamara criteria, it's easy to see that 400 EMT is an exceedingly generous minimal deterrent. Indeed, a well-planned attack of 200 EMT could destroy over two-thirds of Russia's industry and 20 percent of her population, thus fully satisfying the demands of assured destruction. In 1961 another study estimated the minimal deterrent to be 100 EMT. Thanks to the concentrated structure of Soviet industry (just 25 plants pour 60 percent of the USSR's steel, for example), 100 EMT strikes could smash the Soviet economy by demolishing key industries. Mr. William H. Kincade, executive director of the Arms Control Association, has written an article on "economic targeting" for *The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* ("A Strategy for All Seasons," May 1978) citing studies that suggest that even less would suffice. From 300 to 500 warheads, he concludes, can cripple the USSR's ability "to meet essential needs, much less prosecute a war outside national boundaries or play a superpower role."

Since the 1960s, McNamara's criteria have modified somewhat. According to Congressman Les Aspin, "The U.S. no longer targets Soviet population per se, but rather military and industrial installations." This alone would seem to make Soviet civil defense efforts, widely touted a few years back as threatening to destabilize mutual assured destruction, rather beside the point. In any case they apparently wouldn't work very well. The Soviets are believed to have bomb shelter space only for the political leadership and about 10 percent of the essential workforce. The rest of the urban population would be privileged (weather permitting) to evacuate the cities (largely on foot) and dig themselves "expedient shelters" which would take

> *"The Soviets have not only thought about nuclear war but believe that they would win the war....They are filled with war-fighting abilities to bring on an end to the war in a nuclear holocaust of any size. They look at a nuclear weapon in the same fashion that we look at an 8-inch artillery round that is non-nuclear."*
>
> **GENERAL ALTON SLAY, USAF**

Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and Secretary of Defense Harold Brown testifying before the U.S. Senate in behalf of Strategic Arms Limitation (SALT).



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anywhere from 30 hours to over a week to build out of materials that have not been stockpiled. Neither, apparently, has food and water for the civilian shelters been stockpiled; the occupants would have to bring their own food for anywhere from two weeks to two months—an unusually hearty box lunch, to say the least. The shelters are deficient in other necessities too, such as air supply.

In an attack on Soviet military and industrial centers, at least 20 million Russians would die promptly—about as many as died in World War II. By targeting population and evacuation centers, says the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, we could make prompt deaths rise to 145 million. But, as William Kincade points out, with economic/industrial targeting one would want to leave the population intact, to absorb resources that would otherwise go to rebuilding the economy.

Civil defense would be even less effective in protecting industry, since such key industries as steel, oil, transportation and electrical generation are virtually impossible to protect. (In those sectors which could be protected somewhat, Soviet efforts seem far short of what is required.) Nor have the Russians made any attempt to disperse their industry, but continue to concentrate production in large, vulnerable plants. Concludes Dr. Ellsworth Raymond of New York University, writing in the *National Review*, of all places ("Could Russia Survive a Nuclear Attack?" November 25, 1977): "Either Brezhnev expects no nuclear war, or his industrial construction is insanely reckless."

Keeping all this in mind, it is hard to disagree with the 1977 report of the Congressional Joint Committee on Defense Production, which decided that civil defense "[does] not provide any reliable protection against U.S. strategic forces," and that nuclear war "would inevitably destroy the Soviet Union as a great power." That, in essence, is also the opinion of the Congressional Budget Office (June 1978), the CIA (July 1978), the ACDA (Fall 1978) and Rep. Les Aspin's office (December 1978).

America's nuclear arsenal

How does the American nuclear arsenal compare with these calculations of what is actually required to deter nuclear attack? The reader might expect the U.S. to have more weapons than strictly necessary, allowing for mechanical failure, losses in a surprise attack, and so forth; but the United States does not have 200 EMT in its arsenal, or 400 EMT or anything near a minimal deterrent. The United States has a total of *over 6500 equivalent megatons* on hand, far more than needed for deterrence. Nor can the difference be explained as mere insurance against a Russian surprise attack.

The 680 U.S. submarine launched missiles (SLBMs), for example, are effectively invulnerable to Soviet attack. "Today and in the near future," notes the Congressional

> *"In the United States any excuse is used to criticize and to attack the Soviet Union. I see it and I say go ahead, shout, say whatever you will, you have your ideology. Carter and I know we both have a couple of dozen minutes when satellites will tell us missiles are coming.*
>
> *We will never be the first to let such weapons fly. I will still have time to respond. There will be no more United States. But we will still get it in the neck."*
>
> **SOVIET PRIME MINISTER LEONID BREZHNEV**
>
> New York Times, November 18, 1978.

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U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev signing the Strategic Arms Limitation Agreement on June 18, 1979, in Vienna.

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Research Service, "the Soviets apparently have no effective open-ocean anti-submarine warfare, regardless of the scenario envisioned." The SLBMs are carried on 10 Polaris and 31 Poseidon submarines, and (at present) one of the Trident submarines which are meant to replace the Polaris and Poseidon subs. Each Poseidon sub carries 16 C-3 missiles, each loaded with up to fourteen 40-kiloton MIRV (multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicle) warheads. 40-kilotons equals .117 EMT, enough to demolish virtually any industrial target and many military ones. Trident carries 24 C-4 missiles—10 Poseidon subs will also carry the C-4—with seven 100-kiloton (.216 EMT) MIRV's, each three times as effective against blast-resistant targets as the C-3. By 1990, Trident will carry the Trident II missile, now under development, with eight 350-kiloton warheads accurate enough to destroy Soviet missile silos. The 41 Poseidon and Polaris submarines spend 55 percent of their time at sea (Trident will raise that figure to 67 percent). On two days notice the Navy can have 80 percent of these submarines at sea and immune to suprise attack. SLBMs carry almost 750 EMT, or nearly twice what McNamara considered a minimal deterrent. And yet the SLBMs are the least powerful part of the US nuclear forces.

The Air Force maintains a force of 350 B-52 bombers. Eighty of them, B-52D models, carry four 2-megaton bombs each; 270 G and H models carry four bombs and up to 20 short-range attack missiles (SRAMs) with 200-kiloton (.342 EMT) warheads. The B-52 can destroy any target in the USSR; indeed, one of its assigned missions is to destroy missile silos. (True, the B-52 is nowhere nearly fast enough for a surprise attack on Soviet missiles, but several nuclear war scenarios assume—with varying degrees of credibility—that the Russians would keep some of their ICBMs in reserve after an attack. The B-52 could then be used in a "counter force second-strike" against those missiles.) Thanks to an ongoing program to improve its ability to penetrate Soviet air defenses, defense analysts estimate that any B-52 has a 75 percent chance of hitting its assigned targets (the figure is 85 percent with cruise missiles, which some of the planes will begin to carry in 1982). Thirty percent of the B-52 force is kept on "ready alert," able to take off on 15 minutes notice; the Air Force can make it 80 percent within two days. The planes carry a total of 4400 EMT.

Finally, there are 1054 American ICBMS. 54 are liquid-fueled Titan II missiles carrying 9-megaton warheads; 450 are solid-fuel Minuteman IIs with 1.5-megaton warheads; and 550 are Minuteman IIIs carrying three warheads each. Minuteman III is being fitted with 350-kiloton (.497 EMT) Mark 12A warheads; in combination with the NS-20 guidance system, which can guide the Mark 12A to within 600 feet of its target, Minuteman III now has quite a respectable "counterforce" capability—the ability to destroy Soviet ICBMS. Starting in 1986 the Air Force will start deploying the notorious MX missile, which will deliver 10 Mark 12As (500-kiloton and even one-megaton warhead designs are also being considered) with twice the accuracy of Minuteman III, thus giving MX more counterforce capability than even the most dire prediction for the SS-18, the Soviet ICBM which some expect to threaten Minuteman in the 1980s (the Mark 12A gives Minuteman III more counterforce capability than the current SS-18). Currently U.S. ICBMs carry over 1500 equivalent megatons; MX will add at least another 1000.

Contemplating these figures, the reader may wonder why the hawks make such a fuss about the SS-18. Even if, by 1984 (or whenever), the accuracy and reliability of the SS-18 (and SS-17 and -19, other Soviet MIRVed ICBMs that frequently appear in this sort of scenario) enable the Soviet Union to destroy 90 percent of the U.S. ICBM force—which is by no means certain—as well as 70 percent of the U.S. bombers and 45 percent of the SLBMs, the United States would still have better than 4000 warheads, carrying over 1800 EMT, with which to retaliate. (With two days preparation, not unreasonable in a crisis situation, the U.S. could have more than 7500 warheads and 4000 EMT; ten times the minimal deterrent.)

Ah, but according to such as Paul Nitze of the Committee on the Present Danger, the Soviets could "deter our deterrent." To hear Nitze tell it, "only" 800,000 Americans would die in a Soviet counterforce first strike (untrue, as it happens), but the United States deprived of its "second-strike counter-force capability" (also untrue) would have to choose between embracing mutual assured destruction and embracing "surrender." This would not involve submitting to the rule of commissars, however; the worst prospect the hawks can offer is "Finlandization," in which the U.S. would have to let the Russians work their wicked will in (as leading hawk Gen. Daniel Graham suggests) "NATO, or Yugoslavia, or China, or the Middle East."

There is a lesson to be drawn from what General Graham invites us to consider as a fate worse than death, and we will draw it at the proper time; for now we will consider the plausibility of Mr. Nitze's scenario. For one thing, the claim that the Soviet Union will be able to destroy 90 percent of our ICBMs depends on what assumptions we make about the power, accuracy and reliability of Russian missiles. Nitze chooses the most apocalyptic figures. A less pessimistic set led an MIT/Ford Foundation group to conclude recently that even after 1985 the Soviets will not be able to destroy more than 60 percent of the Minuteman force. Paper calculation of counterforce capabilities also ignore the likelihood of systematic aiming errors (hitting a target on a Siberian test range does not necessarily equal hitting a North Dakota ICBM silo) and "fratricide" (the first warheads to explode may destroy later ones). Such matters are covered in detail by Bernard Feld and Kosta Tsipis in "Land-based Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles" (*Scientific American,* November 1979).

More to the point, the estimate of 800,000 deaths from a Russian counterforce attack is ridiculous. The Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) puts it at *20 million,* perhaps as high as 22 million. (The 800,000 figure isn't entirely unrelated to reality, however; OTA believes that's how many Canadians would die.) But could the Soviets kill that many Americans and escape retaliation? Hardly, to judge by the popularity of "Nuke the Ayatollah" T-shirts; Khomeini hasn't even killed one American. "If I had been elected President of the United States," the *Manchester Guardian* quotes one U.S. Senator as saying, "and Soviet missiles started falling on this country, I would have destroyed Russia without hesitation." The speaker is George McGovern, whose self-characterization as "a compassionate, peace-loving person" will draw few dissenters.

The reader who wishes to see Mr. Nitze properly eviscerated should read an elegantly brutal piece by Garry Brewer and Bruce G. Blair in the June 1979 *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists,* "War games and national security with a grain of SALT." The only question they leave unraised is whether the real reason Nitze & Co. are trying so hard to persuade us that the Soviet Union can get away with a

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nuclear attack on the United States is that they wish us to believe that with a little help from such weapons as the MX the United States could get away with attacking the Soviet Union.

Soviet vulnerability

Although the fact is not well advertised, the USSR is much more vulnerable to a counterforce attack than the U.S. About 75 percent of the Soviet deterrent is in ICBMs (versus 25 percent of the American deterrent); 85 percent of the Soviet missile submarines are in port at any time; *none* of their bombers is kept on ready alert (nor have the Soviets upgraded their 135 Bear and Bison bombers, as the U.S. has done with the B-52); and according to a report in *Aviation Week and Space Technology* magazine (June 25, 1979) as few as 30 percent of their ICBMs may be on alert and ready to fire.

Such figures suggest that the United States could launch a very effective first-strike with its existing missiles and bombers. MX and Trident II would be better yet. An anti-submarine warfare force capable of tracking and killing the nine Russian submarines at sea would be nice; so would a few squadrons of F-15s to intercept whatever bombers escape the American missiles. For that matter, if one could destroy almost all of Russia's nuclear weapons, a modest civil defense capability could be quite useful.

Add such refinements as MARV—maneuverable missile warheads that steer themselves to their targets, eliminating aiming errors (and fratricide) for a "one-shot kill" capability, "killer satellites" to knock out Soviet early-warning and communication satellites, and advanced command, control and communication (C^3) systems to coordinate the attack, and the United States would have, in theory, a perfect, unanswerable first-strike capability against the Soviet Union. I trust the reader will not be too surprised to learn that the U.S. has all these things, or will, within a very few years.

Could all the foofaraw about "second-strike counterforce capability" and the like be just a smokescreen for the Pentagon's drive for a first-strike capability? One person who thinks so is Robert C. Aldridge, who worked at Lockheed for many years designing SLBMs for the Navy. He came to that conclusion while working on MARV and Trident II, and quit his job to write a book documenting his thesis: *The Counterforce Syndrome: A Guide to U.S. Nuclear Weapons and Strategic Doctrine.* (Available for $4.55 from the Institute for Policy Studies, 1901 Q St., N.W., Washington, DC 20009; I cannot recommend it too highly.)

Aldridge believes that the Soviet Union will not have a first-strike capability "before the end of this century, if then." But that does not mean that the United States is safe—quite the contrary. Knowing that the U.S. could destroy their deterrent, the Soviet leaders would be tempted, if they were sure an attack was imminent, to launch their weapons while they still had them. (It should be noted that Brezhnev has frequently expressed his belief that the use of even one nuclear weapon would inevitably lead to full-scale nuclear war—and that the last three Secretaries of Defense have frequently endorsed such "limited" nuclear use as part of the doctrine of "flexible response." The U.S. has also repeatedly rebuffed Soviet proposals that both nations forswear the first use of nuclear weapons.) Accidental war would also be more likely under such circumstances. It might even start with an American accident, Aldridge thinks, given the complexity of the C^3 systems necessary for a first strike.

"If that first-strike capability materializes," declares Aldridge, "we can expect nuclear weapons to be used in some way before the year 2000." Worse: "All of these first-strike programs will be in or near production by 1982 or 1983." If they aren't derailed before then, they may build up enough momentum to be almost unstoppable.

The prospects for stopping the first-strike programs look as dismal as those for reviving SALT—more dismal, in fact, when we remember that those first-strike programs were part of Carter's scheme to buy the hawks' support for the treaty. Obviously, a different approach will be needed very soon, if we are to stop the arms race before it is too late.

SALT II and beyond

Why can't we have SALT II? Why are its opponents so rabid, and its supporters so opportunistic?

A typical list of anti-SALT charges centers on the claim that the SALT II treaty would "permit" (or "acquiesce in" or "ratify") "Soviet military superiority" (or "strategic superiority" or "overwhelming Soviet superiority" or the "Soviet drive" for the same, etc., etc.). Subsidiary charges are that it is unfair, unverifiable, restricts American arms programs and leaves the U.S. "defenseless" before the threat of a Soviet first strike.

The bogey of a Russian first strike, as we have seen, is nonsense. "Strategic superiority" is also nonsense: the U.S. could slash its forces by 90 percent and more, and still have far more than a minimal deterrent. In any event, SALT II would not require the U.S. to dismantle a single launcher; its ceilings are above—often well above—American force levels. Nor would SALT discommode any now-planned American arms programs. MX, Trident, and the cruise missile could all proceed as planned. The SALT limits on the number of MIRVs each ICBM and SLBM can carry would limit the number of MARVs MX and Trident II could carry (to 10 and 14, respectively) but that would not prevent the U.S. from acquiring a first-strike capability—unfortunately. Many of the first-strike programs — anti-submarine warfare, civil defense, bomber defense, killer satellites and C^3—would not be affected by SALT at all.

Since the SALT II limits were expressly designed with verification in mind, it is hard to make the charge of unverifiability stick. Strobe Talbott deals with the verification issue at length in his book *Endgame: The Inside Story of SALT II* (New York, Harper and Row, 1979). Nor are the celebrated, lost monitoring stations of Iran necessary to monitor Soviet compliance with the treaty—as Defense Secretary Harold Brown told Congress, and Herbert Scoville explains in *New York* magazine ("The SALT Debate: Why We Don't Need Iran," June 18, 1979).

The charge that SALT II is "unfair" is unclear: it certainly isn't unfair in the sense that it gives a strategic advantage to either side. Unlike SALT I, the limits are the same for both parties. Both are limited to first 2400, then 2250, "strategic launchers" (ie: bombers and missiles). Both are limited to 1320 launchers and "force multipliers" (MIRVed missiles and bombers carrying cruise missiles); 1200 MIRVed missiles and 820 MIRVed ICBMs. Each can develop one new type of ICBM (with a maximum of 10 MIRVs) and as many new SLBMs as it wants (with a maximum of 14 MIRVs). Neither can put more warheads on a missile than

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the maximum number with which it was tested before SALT II was signed.

There are two minor grounds on which SALT II is deemed "unfair"; both are illusory. One is the issue of heavy missiles, such as the SS-18. Both sides are barred from developing or deploying any new heavy missiles; this leaves the USSR with 308 heavy missiles and the U.S. with none. But superior American technology will enable the non-heavy *MX* missile to do anything the *SS-18* can, as we have seen.

The other ground for calling SALT II unfair is its policy toward the Soviet Backfire bomber, which is deployed as a theater-strategic weapon in Eastern Europe and along the Chinese border, and for sea-lane control by the Soviet navy. By some calculations the Backfire can reach the United States, but this is not a new problem; U.S. theater-strategic systems in Western Europe have long been able to reach the Soviet Union. By mutual agreement such weapons will be dealt with in SALT III (if SALT II is ever ratified); in the meantime, SALT II includes a Soviet pledge not to give the Backfire intercontinental range, and not to increase production beyond 30 planes a year.

The endless haggling as to whether the SALT II treaty is "fair" is a good example of what Hans Morgenthau calls "the military balance as a bean-counting exercise." The bean-counter addresses strategic questions solely on the basis of *how many* weapons each side has, rather than asking what each side can do, and needs to do. It is this last method, which is sometimes called the "missions" approach, that I have been using here.

Whether there is such a thing as "strategic superiority" depends on whether one takes the bean-counter or the missions approach. Five years ago, Henry Kissinger answered the question by the missions approach: "What in the name of God is strategic superiority? What is the significance of it... at these levels of numbers? What do you do with it?" Beyond the level of the minimal deterrent, strategic superiority has no significance, and nothing can be done with it. Last July, however, Kissinger repudiated himself and implicitly embraced bean-counting in a statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: "My [earlier] statement reflected fatigue and exasperation, not analysis. If both sides maintain the balance, then indeed the race becomes futile .... But if we opt out of the race unilaterally, we will probably be faced eventually with a younger group of Soviet leaders who will figure out what can be done with strategic superiority."

Kissinger, notes Morgenthau in *The New Republic* (October 20, 1979), was being disingenuous. He and several other witnesses, while admitting "that the concept of nuclear superiority has no meaning in any conventional military sense, ... endeavored to give it a new political meaning.... [N]uclear superiority can add significantly to a nation's political power. The reason is that what counts in the power calculus is not only the actual power available, but also the perceptions of one's power by other nations."

Indeed, the United States has long used its nuclear "superiority" (as measured by the bean-count; the U.S. hasn't had real nuclear superiority since Russia acquired an assured destruction capability in the mid-1950s) as a tool of political power — specifically, to intervene in foreign countries. A 1977 report from the Brookings Institution confirms this: from the end of World War II to October 31, 1975, the United States used its military forces, or the threat of their use, to influence other countries' behavior without actually going to war a total of *215 times*. Strategic nuclear forces were used on 33 occasions. (The Soviet Union, according to Brookings, used force similarly only 115 times, so American interventionism can't be dismissed as merely passive responses to Soviet "aggression." Since the U.S. also uses non-military forms of intervention that are less accessible to the USSR — the Marshall Plan, etc. — the Brookings report considerably understates the true scope of the American record.)

And so the hidden agenda of SALT's opponents is revealed at last. They seek after "nuclear superiority" not in order to defend American freedom, but to order affairs abroad to their own liking. Recall that General Daniel Graham was not worried that a Soviet counterforce attack would install a commissar in the Cornbelt. No: he was afraid that the U.S. could no longer dictate Soviet behavior toward "NATO, or Yugoslavia, or China, or the Middle East." Others worry that unless the U.S. has superiority the nations of Europe will become "Finlandized" and seek to accommodate themselves to the Soviet Union. (Confronted with the fact that most European heads of state endorse SALT, William F. Buckley, Jr. suggested that this proved that Europe is *already* Finlandized!)

SALT II would finish off America's long-declining bean-count superiority and deal a heavy blow to its interventionist foreign policy. The very basis of SALT II is numerical parity for both parties. Sophisticated opponents of SALT (e.g.: the editors of *National Review*) appreciate this: "If Leonid Brezhnev dies having guaranteed some sort of parity with U.S. technology," says *National Review*, "he will go down in history—he will *deserve* to so go down—as one of the greatest Russians and greatest Communists of all time." Indeed.

This explains why such soft-core SALT opponents as Kissinger, Ford, Georgia Senator Sam Nunn and the rest, were willing to vote for ratification in exchange for promised hikes in "defense" spending; the new weapons would serve to overawe foreign nations and replace the political clout SALT would cost abroad. This also explains why Carter was willing to make such a deal — which ultimately helped kill SALT: he shares their devotion to the American Empire and differs only on how it might best be preserved.

Such devotion to interventionism can alone explain why the U.S. government has continued to gather more and more nuclear "overkill," far beyond any rational definition of deterrence. A minimal deterrent of as few as 100 missiles, concedes SALT foe Edward Luttwak, "is adequate to protect the territory and political integrity of the United States. But it is inadequate to protect our allies.... In the real world, unlike the unreal one, you have to respond to many situations—a threat to Israel, to Asia, or to Western Europe — and you can never have enough options, because each situation is different." (Quoted in Sidney Lens, *The Day Before Doomsday*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1977.)

You can never have enough options: this is the essential, underlying premise of interventionism. Until we abandon our foreign policy of global interventionism we will never get the arms race under control, let along dismantle our horrific nuclear stockpiles. Instead, we will continue to accumulate more and more megatonnage, at ever greater cost, to be used ever more recklessly in pursuit of ever diminishing returns. The bankruptcy of American foreign policy has never been clearer. ❑

LR staff writer Bill Birmingham has also written for *Reason*, *Inquiry*, *Policy Report*, and *Libertarian Vanguard*.

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HOW TO CREATE

A Primer for

MAGNUM

DOUG BANDOW

America is facing a new national crisis—the lack of adequate and affordable housing. Rising prices and shrinking supplies are creating volatile social dynamite that few politicians know how to defuse.

Between 1973 and 1979, the cost of the average home rose 107.1 percent, and, because of higher interest rates, mortgage payments increased a staggering 197.8 percent. The price surge in some areas, like Southern California, has been even worse. In contrast, the median family income has risen only 57.7 percent during the same period, and the Federal Home Loan Bank Board estimates that 85 percent of Americans cannot afford a home as first-time buyers.

New housing starts have fallen from roughly two million annually in 1977 and 1978 to 1.7 million in 1979 and a projected 1.2 million this year; apartment construction has fallen off 80 percent since 1965.

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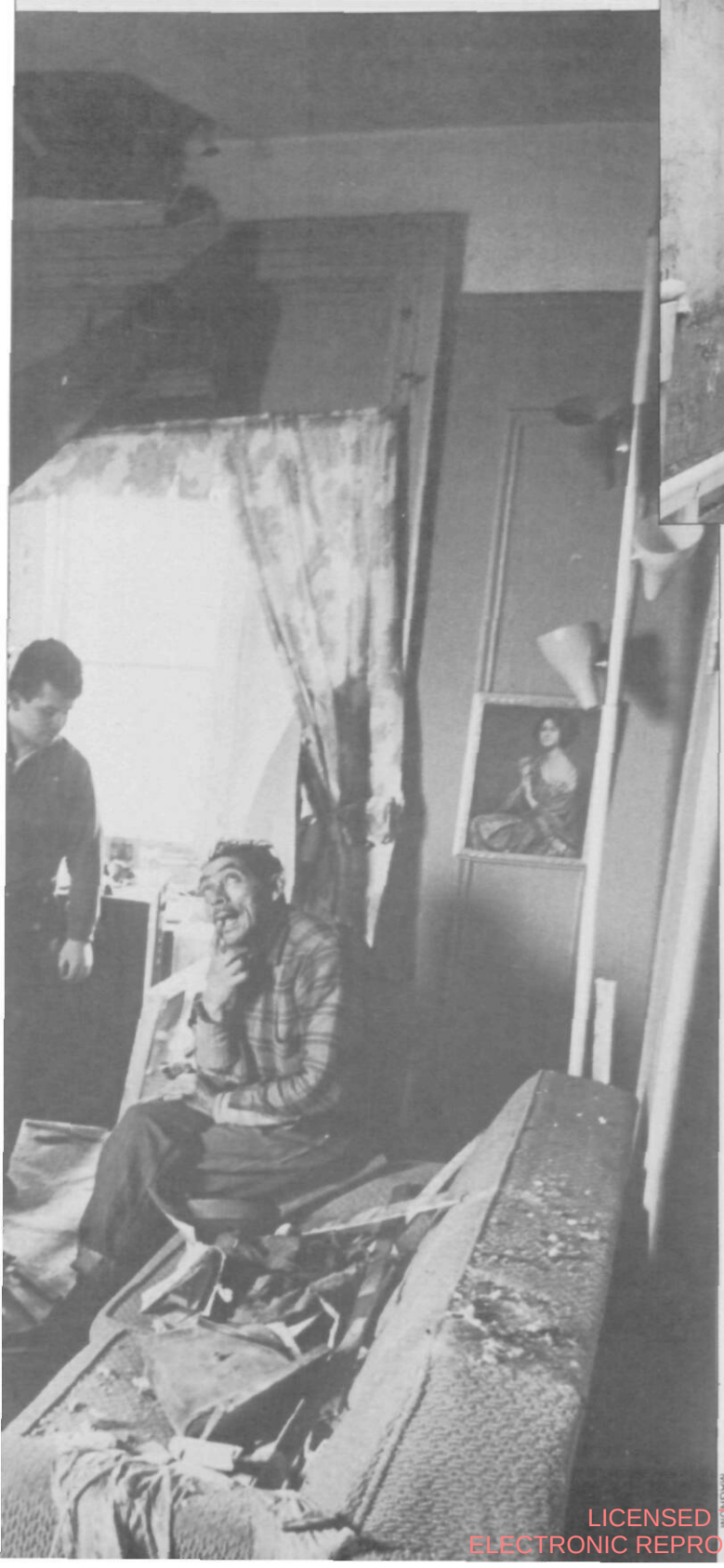
A HOUSING CRISIS

Bureaucrats



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And the Pacific Builders Conference estimates that because of past shortfalls, Californians will be without 500,000 needed homes by 1981.

The problem is perhaps best illustrated by New York City, where 374 people recently signed up for the prospective vacancy of an elderly woman tenant who lay dying. Within 15 minutes of her death, her apartment was rented.

Why must Americans fight for an apartment over the corpse of a deceased tenant? It is not the fault of private industry, which is ready and willing to build the needed housing. Rather, it is the fault of a government which refuses to allow the housing to be built. In fact, government regulation of land use and housing has become so pervasive that John McClaughry, President of the Institute for Liberty and Community, has described it as "the new feudalism," with the state merely replacing the monarchy as "a less personal but more permanent" ruler.

This system, while abrogating individual liberty, has also devastated the private housing market. A Housing and Urban Development Department (HUD) task force reported in 1978 that "Regulation by all levels of government is a major factor in increasing housing costs ... and [t]he proliferation of government regulations, many of which are unduly burdensome, affects all areas...." George Sternlieb, Director of Rutgers University's Urban Studies Center, estimates that this regulation adds roughly 20 percent to the cost of a home, an estimate supported by Sanford R. Goodkin, publisher of the Goodkin Report, and the National Association of Home Builders. The Pacific Coast Builders Conference estimates the cost to be slightly more—from 20 percent to 30 percent—of a home's price.

Regulation forces costs up in three distinct ways. Zoning

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— regulating the specific use of land — both decreases the supply of available land and increases the cost of building on that limited supply. HUD has concluded that "Land-use, environmental, no-growth and exclusionary zoning regulations have... constrained [the] land supply severely, particularly for low- and moderate-income housing." The American Bar Association (ABA) has found that 99.2 percent of the New York metro area's residentially zoned land bars apartments and mobile homes.

Moreover, as William M. Schenkel, real estate professor at the University of Georgia, points out, restrictive zoning forces families to buy new property and build larger homes than they need. The ABA, for instance, found that more than half of Connecticut's vacant land was zoned for a minimum of one or two acres; one particular municipal ordinance required an air conditioner, garbage disposal, master TV antenna, automatic washer and dryer, two off-street parking places, and eight square feet of swimming pool or tennis court per 100 square feet of living space.

Such regulations make the development of lower-income housing difficult, if not impossible; they embody a conflict between a privileged elite who want open space and high property values, and the rest who desire affordable housing. Examples of such conflicts abound. In Placentia, California, in 1978, Reese Development Corporation proposed building 84 four-plex units to be sold at $47,000 each. The planning commission wanted to lower the density, so Reese successively submitted plans for 61 townhouse units at $80,000 each, and 31 single-family homes at $115,000 each. Thus, the government planners decreased the housing supply by 63 percent while increasing its cost by 245 percent.

Costs are also forced upward by the government permit process and building codes, involving a myriad of agencies, inspectors, and rules. The average California developer must deal with the Environmental Protection Agency, HUD, 26 state agencies, the State Coastal Commission and its six regional commissions, the county, and at least one of any number of cities, school districts, and special districts. The regulations cover environmental impact statements; permits for plumbing, vents, and building; approval for sewer and water hook-ups; required solar heating mechanisms; and so on.

Such regulations, according to a 1979 Los Angeles Mayoral housing committee, make it "inordinately and unnecessarily difficult to build new housing...." R. Barry McComic, president of AVCO Community Developers, Inc., estimates that because of such regulations, the national average for moving from raw land through the various levels of government is 15 months, and in California, two years. The Pacific Builders Conference similarly estimates that projects which once took six months now take two years. According to HUD, these extensive delays "exact a heavy cost in terms of overhead, inflation, reduction in the return on investment, and fees and charges...." San Francisco developers and architects estimate that these delays caused by the sequential permit method alone add 10 percent to housing's cost.

Building codes — which specify the materials and techniques for construction—have also been harmful. HUD concluded that "Increased and excessive standards are a factor in escalating the costs of financing, land development, housing construction and rehabilitation, and the provision of supporting amenities, as well as occupancy costs." The variation among municipal codes makes mass production difficult, and the codes bar new materials and techniques, thereby freezing past technology into place. This may discourage some innovation, and has prevented the adoption of technological advances that most observers estimate could save 15 percent of construction costs; as far back as 1922, then Commerce Secretary Herbert Hoover complained that out-dated codes increased costs 10–20 percent.

"Urban renewal took land by eminent domain, cleared it, and then sold it to private developers; half of the projects would have been built elsewhere, without displacing anyone."

When rent-control confronts a landlord who is already unable to afford proper maintenance of his property, condominium conversion — which can dispossess low income renters of their homes of many years — is often the only alternative to abandonment.

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The third way in which government increases the cost of new housing is by imposing what HUD terms "disproportionate" and "burdensome fees and impact taxes." Bernard J. Frieden, Urban Affairs Professor at MIT, confirms that many communities force developers—and ultimately consumers—to finance projects that benefit the entire community, such as a $27,000 bicycle path in Petaluma. George Peterson, of the Urban Institute, has estimated that these fees average $4,652 per dwelling. The Building Contractors Association reported in January, 1978 that in California, the fees amount to more than $8,000 for a $50,000 home, and $13,000 for an $80,000 home. Moreover, since the passage of Proposition 13 in June, 1978, Frieden found that California fees have increased by 26 percent, or up to $3,000; Goodkin estimates the increase to be as much as $4,000. Such increases led UCLA professor Fred Case to conclude that "higher fees are pricing moderate-income Californians out of the housing market."

However, most government officials not only seem blind to their role in creating the housing crisis, but, like Edward H. Lehnen, a Democratic Manhattan Assemblyman, believe "government... can only get more and more involved" in the housing market.

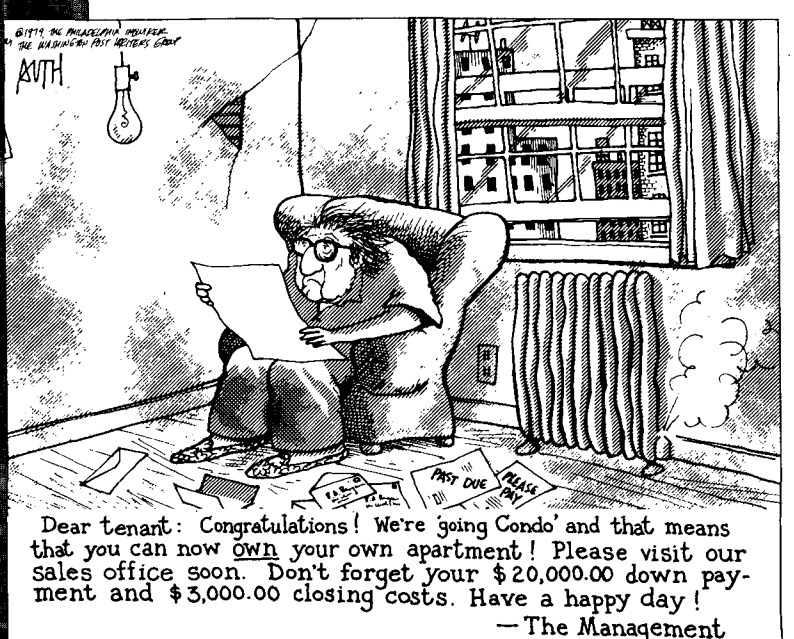
Government programs are not lacking. New York City offers tax abatement for new construction and rehabilitation. Los Angeles has created a Housing Authority to build, and to assist private developers in building, low-cost housing. California, through the California Housing Agency, floats bonds to provide money for lending institutions to lend at below market interest rates. California has also pioneered the concept of "inclusionary zoning"—forcing the developer and other consumers to provide low-cost housing. The city of Palo Alto, for instance, requires some developers to offer 10 percent of their units at roughly 40 percent of their cost to moderate-income families. And the State Coastal Commission requires builders to reserve 25 percent of their new homes for low- and middle-income buyers at reduced prices; it even recently ruled that a 300-room luxury hotel had to set aside 45 of its rooms at one-half the regular rate for the economically disadvantaged. The federal panoply of programs includes: buying mortgages and reselling them at below the marked rate, subsidies to build low income housing, rent subsidies insuring mortgages and subsidizing interest rates, rehabilitation subsidies, urban renewal, and public housing.

But the impact of such programs has generally been perverse. Urban renewal, for example, now discontinued, took land by eminent domain, cleared it, and then sold it to private developers. HUD estimated that by 1975, 612,850 housing units had been demolished, being replaced by only 265,161 private units, half of which were expensive luxury apartments. The result was nearly one-half million fewer homes for the economically disadvantaged.

In fact, 65 percent of the displaced residents were blacks or Hispanics, whose displacement made way for civic centers, office buildings, and luxury apartments, which, according to the Committee for Economic Development, were utilized by "upper-income, predominantly white families." Moreover, those residents forced to relocate had to pay more for their housing; a Boston study found that 30 percent of the displaced residents faced rent increases of up to 73 percent. Finally, it was estimated that half of the projects would have been built elsewhere anyway, without displacing anyone or spending any tax dollars.

Federal public housing for the poor, according to Stanford University economics professor Richard F. Muth, has segregated "the poor into separate ghettos, walling them off from the rest of the city," has had high turnover rates, and has suffered from extensive juvenile delinquency. Some projects have been so unappealing that even the poor have refused to live in them: the Providence Roger Williams

MAGNUM



Dear tenant: Congratulations! We're 'going Condo' and that means that you can now own your own apartment! Please visit our sales office soon. Don't forget your $20,000.00 down payment and $3,000.00 closing costs. Have a happy day!
—The Management

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Homes has a 40 percent vacancy rate; the St. Louis Pruitt-Igoe has had one of 80 percent (and has since closed down). Moreover, the cost of each unit averaged $80,000, their construction costs averaged 20 percent higher than similar private units, and they cost substantially more—ranging up to an additional $64 a month in Seattle for a one-bedroom unit—than private apartments.

Figure A

Program	Date	Demolitions	Construction
Urban Renewal	as of 1/1/68	404,000	
Urban Highway Clearance	1956-1968	330,000	
Public Housing - Site Clearance	as of 12/68	177,000	
Public Housing - Equivalent Eliminations	as of 12/68	143,000	
Building Code Enforcement	1960-1968	384,000	
State Action	1960-1968	208,000	
Total Units Demolished		1,646,000	
Public Housing	1950-1968		559,000
Demolition Deficit		1,087,000	

In fact, taken together, by 1968, government programs had created a demolition deficit of over a million units (see Figure A)—a figure that has since increased, though the government does not know by how much.

In Michigan State University economist Richard Craswell's words: "Thus, while people have increasingly come to believe that private enterprise has got the cities into a mess that only the government can get them out of that same government has been destroying over a million low income units,... actively working to reduce the amount of housing available to the poor, driving up prices and pushing inhabitants into even worse housing."

Government has also furiously legislated to remedy supposed "abuses" of the market—and has, in the process, made things even worse. For example, the number of rental apartments being converted to condominiums and stock cooperatives has been doubling each year in California since 1976, and has risen nationally from 45,000 in 1977 to 145,000 in 1979. Josef S. Nobel, President of a Los Angeles conversion management firm, estimates that conversions only account for "barely one-half of one percent" of the rental supply, but cities such as Evanston, Illinois, Denver, Boston, Los Angeles, and San Francisco have frantically passed ordinances restricting conversions, requiring relocation assistance for tenants, and mandating special protection for the elderly, handicapped, disabled, and single parents. These measures further disrupt the housing market, since some people's only hope to purchase a home is a condominium. Moreover, they will ultimately exacerbate the rental crisis. For example, giving special protection to "disadvantaged" tenants makes them more expensive to the landlord, encouraging landlords to avoid renting to them whenever possible.

Further, though in the short-run such ordinances help prevent any additional decrease in the rental stock, in the long-run they virtually assure that there will be no increase, because they effectively lock owners into rental units forever. Destroying the landlords' flexibility will drive them away from the rental market altogether; they will build condominiums or office buildings instead.

Finally, government is increasingly legislating the "final solution"—rent control. Once confined to the Northeast and three Alaska cities, this housing blight has recently spread to over a dozen California communities, covering about half of California's ten million tenants. Rent control is a seductive panacea turned to by frustrated and ill-informed people intent on ignoring economic reality. People who would never think of controlling anyone else's wages, prices, or dividends think nothing of penalizing only landlords for our housing crisis.

In fact, landlords, most of whom start out with negative or zero cash flows, do not deserve such treatment. Between 1967 and 1979, the Consumer Price Index rose 107 percent and rents only 71 percent. As Bill Femske asked in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* in 1979: "Do the City Council and the vocal renters think it is easy to run a building where this year gasoline has gone up 40 percent; electricity rates up 18 percent [by a city-controlled utility]; plumbing charges up 24 percent; natural gas 12 percent; maintenance charges a whopping 35 percent; and worst of all my insurance is up 300 percent from two years ago?" However, irrespective of rent control's moral implications, its practical effect is the euthanasia of the private rental market. Even Swedish

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socialist economist Assar Lindbeck admits that "In many cases rent control appears to be the most effective technique presently known to destroy a city—except for bombing."

In particular, rent control creates and intensifies housing shortages, thereby raising prices in the long-run. First, it discourages investment in the rental industry, keeping, according to Roger Starr, former head of New York City's Housing and Development administration, "the supply permanently inadequate." Numerous economic studies have demonstrated that as the profit incentive, or reward, for apartment construction falls—through rent control, for example—fewer apartments are constructed. Investors will instead invest in alternative projects—single-family homes, condominiums, office buildings, motels, or even, according to Jeffrey Palmer of the Wharton School, interest bearing securities, or in alternative regions: the *San Diego Union* recently reported on a shift in investment from rent-controlled California cities to Denver. Moreover, the 1976 Massachusetts Harbridge House report and studies by Gruen Gruen and Associates and the Development Economic Group have all found that many thrift institutions and insurance companies refuse to make loans for rent-controlled construction.

In fact, in virtually every community with rent control the supply of rental housing has either held constant or fallen. Under rent control in Washington, D.C., the number of apartments has fallen from 199,100 to 175,900, and new construction has virtually ceased, despite a growing demand for apartments. In some Brooklyn neighborhoods, virtually no new housing has been constructed since 1935; in Manhattan, where rent control has been most strict, the rental supply contracted by 1,000 units between 1943 and 1967—elsewhere years of a national housing boom. A few decades ago, 70 percent of New York City's apartments were privately financed; now only 10 percent are. For the two years that rent control was in effect in Miami Beach, there was no new rental construction. In Boston, the Mayor's Committee on Rent Control concluded that rent control reduced the quantity of units available to low- and moderate-income people—a result also conceded by most observers in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Finally, rental construction is at an all-time low in California, with virtually all new construction being condominiums. In October, two USC researchers concluded that rent control had discouraged apartment construction in Santa Monica, Berkeley, and Davis, and more recently, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that rent control had worsened Los Angeles's "already critical rental housing shortage by driving off big builders and their money sources."

Rent control also restricts the housing supply by making some apartments unprofitable, encouraging their abandonment. This phenomenon is most pronounced in New York City, where some 20,000 rental owners went bankrupt between 1967 and 1970, and owners *annually* walk away from some 30,000 units because, official city reports admit, they cannot afford the upkeep. Abandonment also substantially increased in Lynn, Massachusetts, before rent control was repealed, and "walkaways" from marginally profitable properties are becoming increasingly common in Washington, D.C. Of course, as two USC researchers confirmed in California, rent control also speeds the conversion of existing rental units to condominiums and stock cooperatives, further worsening the initial rental shortage.

Another deleterious effect of rent control is to impair the maintenance and repair of apartments. It is difficult, if not impossible, for landlords to cover increasing costs of fuel, taxes, plumbing, carpets, etc., when their rents are controlled. And as Starr points out, when many minor problems are not repaired, they then may become major problems, ruining an apartment. Under rent control, Miami Beach apartments suffered widespread cutbacks in maintenance and

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"Even Swedish socialist economist Assar Lindbeck admits that, 'In many cases rent control appears to be the most effective technique presently known to destroy a city—except for bombing.'"

Rent control makes some apartments so unprofitable that their owners walk away from them. In New York City, some 30,000 units are abandoned each year, and "walkaways" from marginally profitable apartments in Washington D.C. are increasing.

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services. The Gruen Gruen & Associates study of New Jersey found that rent control discourages repairs and keeps lenders from making improvement loans to landlords. In Los Angeles, managers admit that they are doing "nothing for renters now," and suppliers of carpets, furniture, and other items to landlords report that their business is off 30 to 70 percent since rent control was imposed in 1978. According to New York City reports, the difference between proper maintenance costs and the rents allowed landlords is almost $300 million. It is therefore no surprise that the city estimates the existence of 400,000 deteriorated units, and economist Richard Muth reports that New York City is the only major city for which the fraction of substandard dwellings failed to decline during the 1950s. The *Amsterdam News,* the city's largest black newspaper, even editorialized that "we in minority areas live in rat-infested buildings that resemble bombed-out war areas. And...this type of housing is rapidly increasing... solely because of rent control."

Rent control also encourages tenants to hold apartments as long as possible, slowing apartment turnover. This misallocates housing, since shrinking and growing families fail to move to more efficient quarters. It also impairs the mobility of tenants, controlling particularly newcomers, and the poor (who tend to move most often).

While controlling the poor, rent control frequently benefits the rich. Luxury apartments are often exempted, artificially skewing investment away from lower income units. Where such apartments are covered, the well-to-do, such as New York City's Mayor and the President of the American Stock Exchange, have their rents subsidized. In fact, the U.S. Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee concluded in 1977 that in New York City, "a small, privileged group of long-time residents, largely middle class" are rent control's prime beneficiaries.

Rent control, by lowering rental property values, also shifts the property tax burden to homeowners. The value of rental property has declined in this way in Cambridge, Massachusetts, rent-controlled New Jersey municipalities, Miami Beach, and New York City. In the first three years of rent control in Washington, D.C., the assessed value of apartments fell by 1 percent, while that for single family homes and condominiums almost doubled.

A more insidious effect of rent control is the encouragement of personal discrimination. The excess demand from the rent control created shortage must be rationed in some manner other than price; landlords are apt to choose professionals, whites, families without children, etc. UCLA economist Harold Demsetz found that the *Chicago Tribune* carried a higher percentage of racially discriminatory ads during World War II than before or after the war-time controls.

Finally, rent control results in the creation of yet another bureaucracy, subject to political patronage and corruption, and burdened by excessive costs and administrative delays. New York City spends millions of dollars annually on its rent control programs. The *Washington Post* has described the D.C. program as "an administrative nightmare," citing six month delays for *unopposed* rent increase applications.

Renters are rightly angry over high rents, but their anger should be directed not against those who provide rental housing, but against those who block it. Political myopia cannot overcome economic reality — more housing, not more regulation, is what is needed.

Many advocates of increased government intervention in the housing industry realize that their programs are failing, but consider this fact, in effect, beside the point. Martin Anderson, author of *The Federal Bulldozer,* has written that after talking with local community leaders about urban renewal, he found a "consistent theme running through their off-the-record statements.... They were not seriously concerned with the poor people living in the areas they had tentatively marked for renewal; they were not concerned with any personal gain; they were not even very concerned with getting a substantial amount of cash from the rest of the taxpayers via Washington. But they were concerned with *power.*" In fact, power—subject as it is to abuse and misuse—is what housing regulation is all about. Power to dispense grants of privilege to favored interests. Power to override individual rights. Power to shape growth as the elite believes best. And power to control the construction and allocation of housing in our society.

There is one positive alternative to the failed politics of power and control—the free market, the same free market that, between 1950 and 1968, created 32.4 million new homes while the government was destroying over a million. Indeed, Bernard Siegan, author of *Land Use Without Zoning,* argues that "the least fallible of city planners is the free market," pointing out that in the Texas cities of Houston, Pasadena, Wichita Falls, Laredo, and Baytown, which have no zoning, the market has separated uses and allocated land to its highest-valued use. If any errors are made, the market corrects them; zoning would only lock them in.

Private land use planning is supplemented in such cities by voluntary restrictive covenants, which assure property owners as to the future use of their property. Private civil court action—either for nuisance or trespass—helps deal with improper land uses. And arbitration can at times be substituted for reliance on the courts.

The National Commission on Neighborhoods has also suggested replacing traditional building codes with an essentially privatized system patterned after that in France, where builders are liable for structural defects. Builders normally buy insurance to protect against malpractice claims; insurance companies hire private investigators to check buildings; and mortgage lenders and property insurance carriers generally require warranty insurance before they will issue a mortgage or insurance.

Even within the current regulatory structure, private individuals are working to meet the housing crisis. For example, in San Francisco, Action for Better Elders (ABLE) is arranging house-sharing for senior citizens. Some lenders are now offering variable mortgage payments, to increase over the life of the mortgage as the person's income increases. And so on.

The housing crisis is a *manufactured* crisis, caused and promoted by a government that has systematically placed the power to control our housing destiny in the hands of arrogant elitists, both elected and appointed; sacrificed individual rights for the financial gain, aesthetic pleasure, and personal advancement of others; restricted the supply of land; created unconscionable delays in building; increased the costs of construction; discouraged innovation; regulated and ruined the rental market; and destroyed over a million homes.

City councils and their planning officials produce no housing. Nor do rent control or HUD administrators. Rather, builders produce housing. And if government officials are serious about solving the housing crisis, they will eliminate, not increase, government regulation of the housing market. ❑

Doug Bandow is a California attorney and freelance writer.

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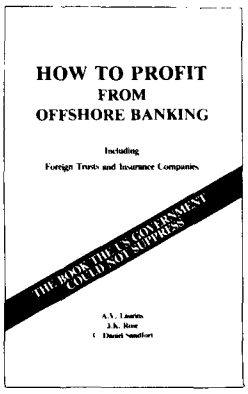

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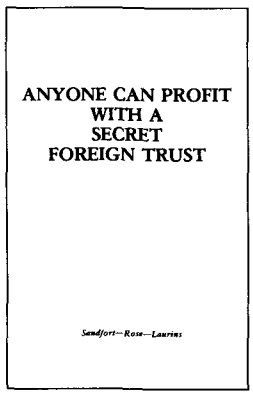

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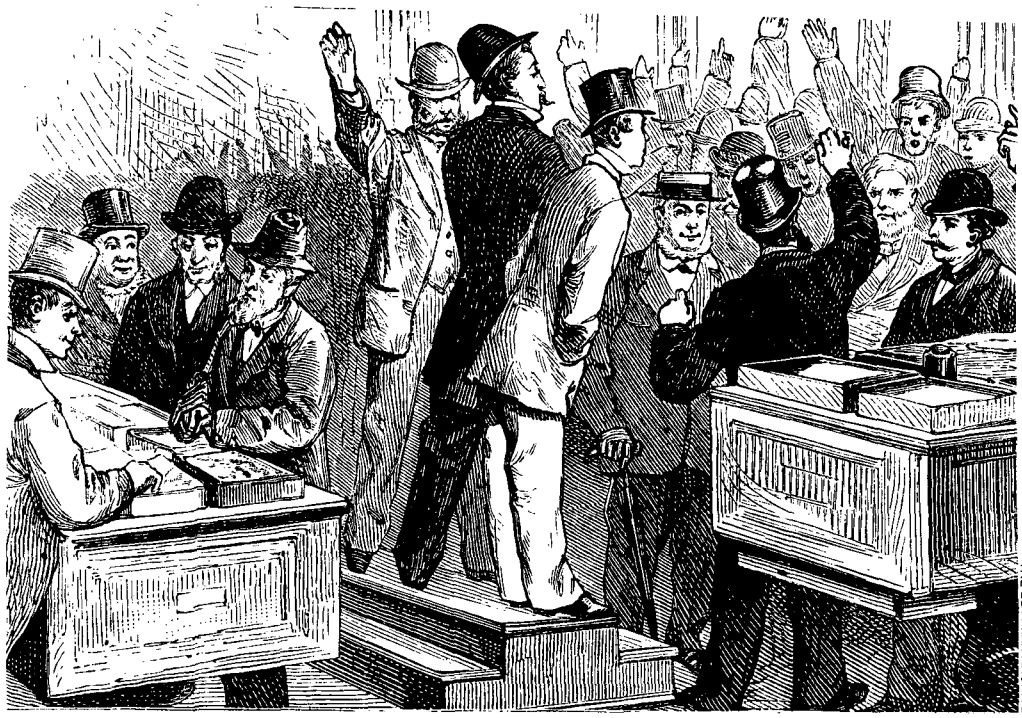

THE BETTMAN ARCHIVE

The Chicago Board of Trade, shown in 1877, was the first organized system that spaced the marketing of crops over the year, which nearly eliminated chronic gluts and shortages.

The politics of food

MICHAEL LIPSON

Merchants of Grain, *by Dan Morgan. Viking, 387 pp., $14.95.*

ON JANUARY 10, PRESIdent Carter announced that 17 million tons of grain pledged to the Soviet Union would instead be embargoed in retaliation for Russia's invasion of Afghanistan. Feeling threatened by events that seemed far beyond their control, most Americans applauded his "get tough" strategy — everyone, that is, except most of those who make their living from agriculture. To them, thanks in part to decades of U.S. government intervention in the market for grain, Russian wheat sales make all the difference. Midwesterners cried to Washington that they were being made scapegoats for the sins of the Soviets. After all, they justifiably claimed, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) had told them in early 1979 to "plant fencepost to fencepost" in anticipation of another record year of Russian grain exports.

Now the farmers were stuck. The embargo disrupted the commodity markets — trading was suspended for two days on the Chicago Board of Trade — and 17 million tons of grain which had been enroute to Gulf ports now clogged grain elevators all the way down the Mississippi, while the overflow lay rotting in sheds and under canvas tarps throughout the farm belt. But the griping farmers have been placated to some extent: immediately following his announcement of the embargo, Carter promised that the federal government would pay for the excess grain and its storage, at a cost to American taxpayers of over a billion dollars. Considering that the Iowa caucuses were at the time less than two weeks away, the President's generosity with taxpayer's money was not hard to understand.

Neither was it an unprecedented decision. Since the middle of the last century, American politicians have regarded farm interests as sacrosanct, for the simple reason that most Presidential elections hinge upon the farm vote. Over the past seventy-five years, farmers have managed to drain untold billions from federal and state troughs in the form of export subsidies, price supports, research and development funds, land grant colleges, and monopoly allotments which restricted production to a privileged club. Currently, the USDA showers over $5 billion a year on agriculture, and that amount is not likely to decrease anytime soon.

Because the federal government has continuously intervened in agriculture in such fashion for over a century, Dan Morgan offers a thorough account of its interventions in *Merchants of Grain,* his exciting chronicle of the history of the grain trade since its modest beginning on the Black Sea port of Odessa in the mid-nineteenth century. And though it was certainly not his intention—considering his obviously pro-interventionist views—Morgan has handed libertarians a priceless gift: all the evidence we need to launch a scathing attack on

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state-planned agriculture.

Prior to the late eighteenth century, the grain trade was a strictly local phenomenon: peasants brought their crops to the local market where they exchanged them for other staples. The merchants' distribution network seldom extended past the local parish or town. Transportation costs were far too high to permit international trade in anything except luxury goods for the landed nobility. But the industrial revolution radically changed these trade patterns. As the working class population swelled into large urban concentrations, particularly in Britain, huge grain imports became necessary to feed it. Unfortunately, the protectionist Corn Laws, which forbade the importation of foreign grain into England, were formidable barriers to supplying the cities with adequate food at reasonable prices. But thanks to the heroic efforts of classical liberals Richard Cobden and John Bright, with their Anti-corn Law League, the measures were finally repealed in 1845.

The end of the Corn Laws opened up the vast British market to farmers who had never before sold to anyone outside their own country. Russian peasants in the Ukraine, for example, began bringing their wheat in ox-carts to the new, bustling port of Odessa on the Black Sea. It was during this era that three of the five great grain trading fortunes of today were made. Leopold Louis-Dreyfus was a farmer who left home to establish a grain business in Basel, Switzerland; the business prospered and grew into a major trading concern. Michael Fribourg left his father's small grain business in Antwerp to begin his own; his heirs are now the owners of Continental Grain. Ernesto Bunge split from his family in Holland to found what is now the largest grain export firm in Argentina.

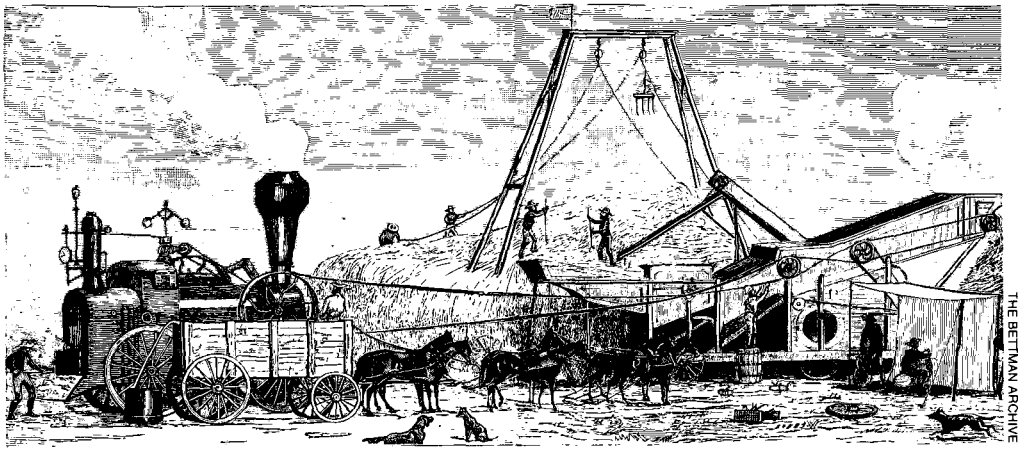
The mid-to-late nineteenth century witnessed scores of technological improvements which enabled merchants to distribute more grain over longer distances more efficiently than ever before. Telegraphic communications put distant suppliers at a businessman's fingertips, while transoceanic cables linked the whole globe to London grain markets. Steel hulled ships reduced transportation costs to a small fraction of the grain price, making it economical to ship grain over such long distances as from California to England. Concrete grain elevators, developed in the late 1870s, increased storage capacity while reducing the risk of fire in wooden grain bins.

But the most important innovation was the creation of an orderly marketplace for grain transactions. The Chicago Board of Trade, founded in 1848, made it possible for farmers to have a reliable outlet for their products. As Morgan writes: Before the Chicago exchange opened, farmers who hauled their grain over plank roads to the raw, new city often had to go from merchant to merchant to find a buyer. Sometimes, after the harvest, when the grain converged on Chicago, there was so much of it that it had to be dumped into Lake Michigan, and later, shortages would develop. There was no organized system for spacing the marketing of crops out over the year, with the price at time of delivery guaranteed, and this in turn provided incentives to hold grain in storage. Moreover, the fact that there was a public price for all to see in Chicago reduced the chances that merchants could cheat the farmers. True, markets were often manipulated—but often to the benefit of farmers.

One famous case of such market manipulation surfaced in California during the 1870s, when farmers became incensed at what they took to be monopoly practices on the part of the great "grain baron" of San Francisco, Isaac Friedlander, a German Jewish immigrant who settled in the city during the 1849 Gold Rush. Fortune hunters who were tired of panning for gold soon turned to wheat growing, which quickly became an almost equally profitable venture. There was, however, a problem: California was three thousand miles overland from the East Coast and therefore its wheat could not compete in East Coast markets with wheat from midwestern states. California had to look overseas if it wanted an export market. Britain's teeming urban population seemed to be the perfect market, but California was 14,000 miles away from England via Cape Horn, and San Francisco was not yet a major port on world trade routes. Ships therefore had to be chartered; they would not stop in San Francisco without a guaranteed cargo for the run all the way to London. Friedlander obtained the financial backing of the local banking community, which was, of course, anxious to put San Francisco on world trade routes. He used his borrowed funds to charter the needed ships—and to corner the wheat market to insure that the ships would have a cargo. The rest is history. By 1870, Morgan writes, "rural California and mercantile San Francisco became almost a colonial appendage of Victorian Britain recognizing no economic overlord save Liverpool."

In order to establish this trade, Friedlander, for all his alleged greediness, had to incur considerable risk: he had to estimate accurately the size of the year's wheat crop so that the proper number of vessels could be chartered. If he overestimated the crop's size, he would face substantial losses and possible bankruptcy, since he would have to pay for the ships whether he had the wheat to fill them or not. In fact, he did go broke in just this way in 1878, the year before he died.

These facts did little, however, to soothe the feelings of the farmers who were infuriated by what they perceived as unfair practices by



THE BETTMAN ARCHIVE

In the late 19th century, wheat became big business in California, due to the opening up of the British market and the advent of steel-hulled ships that reduced shipping costs.

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Friedlander and the banks from whom they obtained their crop loans. The banks would only lend them money on the condition that they put up their crops as collateral. This enabled the bankers to force the crops to market whenever wheat prices were propitious for them. Of course, to the extent that Friedlander correctly judged the market and cornered it, he drove the prices up for the farmers as well as for himself. When he won,they won. His control of the market consisted of his ability to predict it. When, in 1873, the Patrons of Husbandry (the Grange) made its one and only attempt to break Friedlander's "monopoly" it went bankrupt; its own agents overchartered shipping!

In Minnesota, meanwhile, another try at market manipulation was getting under way. Wheat millers, led by the prominent Pillsbury and Washburn families, organized sixteen of the eighteen millers in the Twin Cities into the Minneapolis Millers Association. This buyer's cartel then unsuccessfully attempted to fix the price millers paid farmers for grain. The Millers Association controlled the railroad lines which led like spokes out of the cities, and which were needed to transport the grain. But even this did not give them total control, for, as Morgan writes, "they often had to compete for the wheat against such cities as Duluth, Green Bay, and Milwaukee, and the threat of that competition often brought them into conflict with the bankers, railroads and warehousemen who had a vested financial interest in promoting grain traffic to these cities." In the end, the monopolists were defeated by the market.

Like almost all historians of the Progressive Era, Morgan combs the record carefully for evidence of a successful grain conspiracy—but to no avail. Friedlander's shipping "monopoly" depended completely upon his own ability to accurately estimate the size of the California wheat crop. Unlike such monopolies as the electric utilities, Friedlander never had his profits guaranteed by government; only he could guarantee them—by making the right investment decisions. The Minneapolis wheat cartel, despite its control over shipping lines and grain depots, still could not manipulate prices to its own advantage. The constantly changing conditions of the marketplace constantly thwarted all businessmen's efforts to form monopolies and cartels.

It wasn't long, however, before governments did what businessmen had failed to do. The U.S., Britain and France turned the grain trade into a virtual public utility during World War I by pegging the world price of spring wheat at $2.20 a bushel. International wheat trade from that point forward was not between buyers and sellers, but between governments. The post-war period then brought unprecedented prices for American agricultural products; the European harvests had been virtually wiped out and those countries were left dependent upon American imports.

Grain prices skyrocketed again during the speculative frenzy of the late 'twenties. Of course, the cause of the soaring wheat prices then was exactly the same as the cause of the famous stock market boom of the same period: the Federal Reserve System's recklessly inflationary monetary policies. But Morgan, incredibly, fails even to consider inflation as a major cause of the speculative orgy and the depression it helped to create. Instead, he blames those "Presidents [who] were all proponents of limited government, believers in laissez-faire, and devotees of price as the great regulator of international economics," Presidents like Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. Has Morgan forgotten that Hoover was the director of the Agricultural Stabilization Board, which set the price of wheat at $2.20 per bushel? This is a fact which speaks volumes for his "laissez-faire" attitudes.

After the stock market crash and the onset of the depression, one of the largest gluts in American agricultural history forced grain prices down to pennies a bushel. But it was government, not the market, which had created the mess. Republicans had enacted the Smoot-Hawley tariff, one of the steepest in U.S. history, and aimed specifically at European imports. As many predicted, the tariff infuriated the Europeans, who retaliated with even steeper duties for U.S. farm products. With the export market blown to pieces, American grain piled up everywhere, particularly because the government-fueled speculative boom had encouraged farmers to plant the biggest crop in U.S. history.

The depression changed the grain business profoundly and for the worse. The government had created the problems; now it tried to solve them by transforming the Department of Agriculture into a vast planning agency. First, the USDA instituted a massive price support program to keep the farmers satisfied. The price support was keyed to an artificial price level, decreed by the government to be the "fair price" for grain. Farmers would sell their grain on the market for what they could get—a price that was almost always lower than the "fair price" for grain set by the government—and the USDA would then reimburse them for the difference between the market price and the "fair price." In short, the price support guaranteed the farmers a certain price for their crop no matter what the market was. But outright subsidies like these presented other problems. Because farmers were being subsidized for whatever they produced, there had to be an additional mechanism to limit the amount that individual farmers could cultivate; otherwise the market would be hopelessly and permanently flooded. Therefore the government had to control the amount of land under cultivation through allotment programs which forced farmers to keep a certain percentage of their land fallow. After the depression, there was scarcely an acre in the nation which was not thus controlled by the USDA.

The Department also radically changed the system of grain distribution. Government intervention insured that only highly capitalized grain companies could survive under its price controls and stringent regulations. As Morgan points out, before the New Deal "it was not necessary to be rich to challenge the established grain companies: shipping and insurance could be contracted for once grain was purchased and a customer had been found. Credit and quick wits were what enabled [a small company like] Continental to grow as rapidly as it did in the 20s; and the same qualities made it possible for newcomers to pop into the business all the time." After the depression, however, "capital *was* important." For example, "it was useful to have upstream grain elevators where the government would store grain it purchased under price controls." Thanks to federal regulations and price supports, the grain trade was transformed, in effect, from a free market industry into a permanent cartel.

After World War II, agricultural policy became one of the principal issues in both domestic and international politics. According to Morgan, "the Department

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of Agriculture, by 1950, had become a vast planning agency that reached into every rural county of America with credit, crop insurance, scientific advice, and farm programs that controlled how much farmers grew and how much they received for their grain." And, of course, giant grain surpluses piled up in elevators all across the midwest, because price supports encouraged farmers to overproduce. The USDA disposed of this grain in a manner which served the interests of Cold War foreign policy.

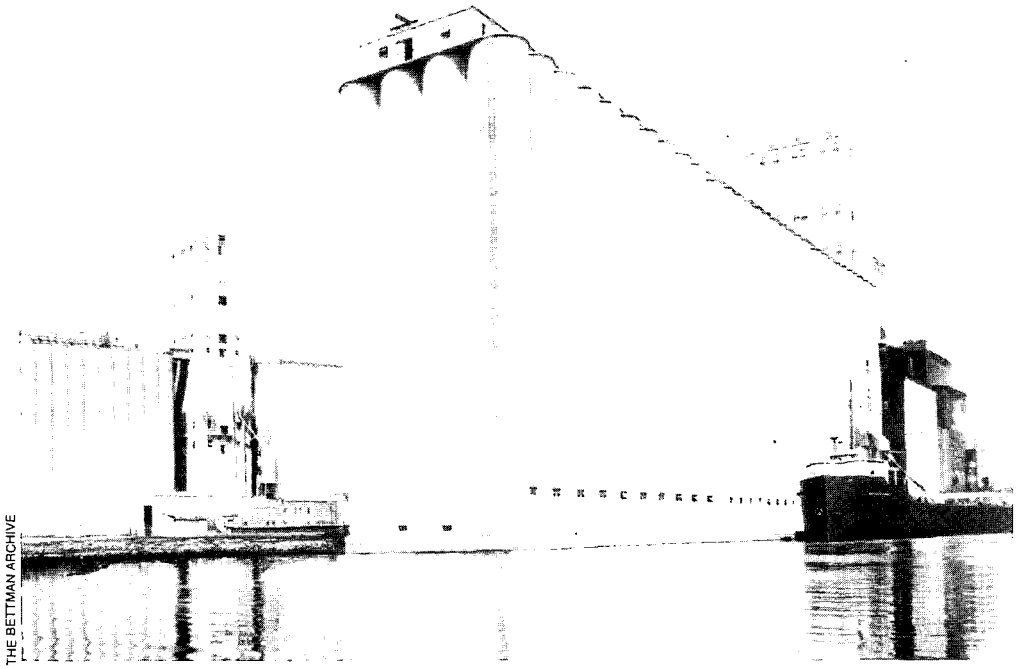
The second World War left Europeans desperately in need of food imports just as the first World War did. And the American government granted them billions of dollars in loans under the Marshall Plan so that Western governments could buy up our grain surpluses at bargain prices. The large grain companies of Cargill and Continental played the profitable role of middlemen in these deals.

It was not until 1954, however, that the government consolidated its food aid program into a single global policy. Public Law 480 became, as Morgan puts it, "one of the most durable pieces of legislation passed by Congress." Basically a permanent food welfare program for the world, PL 480 was designed to promote American foreign policy interests by granting food loans to friendly countries under very generous terms underwritten by the USDA. In foreign countries like Japan, the Agriculture Department sponsored school lunch programs, department store exhibits, and even training classes for bakers—all explicitly for the purpose of increasing these countries' consumption of U.S. farm products. Both at home and abroad USDA "nutritionists" sought to "educate" housewives on the merits of proper dietary habits, which, not surprisingly, emphasized the copious consumption of surplus wheat, dairy products and beef subsidized by the Department. Domestically, farm subsidies made good politics: "Presidential politics," says Morgan, "was as often as not farm politics; the farm bloc helped elect Truman in 1948, and it added to Eisenhower's plurality in 1952." As we have seen, the subsidies also proved useful in foreign policy. In the '50s the Republicans dominated the USDA, using the agency as the party porkbarrel. As long as Kansas-born General Ike remained in the White House, midwestern interests would always be looked after.

But it was not only the U.S. that faced the problem of massive agricultural surpluses: Canada, Japan, Western Europe, Australia and Argentina had their own price support programs for their own farm constituencies and also suffered surpluses. As a result, world food prices stayed low and seldom fluctuated. And the low prices plus the massive glut made competition among food exporting countries ruthless. But none was more ruthless than the USDA. Every exporting country complained bitterly about its "dumping" practices. Using American foreign policy to bludgeon open new markets, the USDA was more successful at disposing of its surplus than other countries.

It was also more creative. In addition to dumping on existing markets, the USDA created new ones in Third World countries by making mutually advantageous deals with dictators. Morgan uses Iran as an example to show how the American government made one agriculturally self-sufficient country dependent upon U.S. food imports. Until only a decade ago, Iran supplied 90 percent of its own food requirements. During plentiful years, it even exported a modest amount. Then the Department of Agriculture intervened. It introduced capital-intensive agribusiness methods to primitive Persian agriculture, so that the newly needed raw materials could be imported from the States. It built a large poultry and dairy industry which required the importation of large amounts of American corn and soybeans. The explicit idea was to create industries that fostered dependence upon U.S. farm products. As Morgan writes: "The Americans *stipulated* in the PL 480 agreements that some of the proceeds from selling the wheat and soy beans in Iran would be used to set up dairy, poultry or livestock operations that would 'facilitate the utilization of *additional* U.S. agricultural commodities.' The bilateral agreements further stated that project funds were not to be used for any purpose that would produce Iranian commodities for export." It goes without saying, of course, that many, if not most, of the Iranian beneficiaries were relatives or friends of the Shah. Meanwhile, domestic agriculture went to pieces; poor peasant farmers could not compete with the largesse of the U.S. Treasury. Iran now produces less than half of its own food supply.

As in the case of the Shah, the Third World's agricultural dependence upon the U.S. often helps to preserve



THE BETTMAN ARCHIVE

Concrete grain elevators, which increased the amount of grain that could be stored without risk of fire, were only one of the innovations that made the Midwest the world's breadbasket.

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the brutal military regimes of those countries. As Morgan writes: "The availability of the imports makes it possible to postpone radical domestic reform, land redistribution, and the redirection of credit to different sectors of the society. The sale of the imported food on the local economy generates money that can be used to pay the civil servants, police forces, and soldiers who make up the regime's base of political support." Ruling elites have always forced the peasantry to exist at a subsistence level. But dictatorial regimes *must* provide that subsistence level in order to stave off the omnipresent threat of revolution. During droughts or shortages, these countries always run the risk of running short of food. In Zaire, the Continental Grain Company threatened to cut off grain supplies to the vicious Mobutu regime when it began falling behind on its payments. Mobutu backed down because, as Morgan tells us, "the bread supply was as much of a pacifier of the urban population of Zaire as the bodyguards who patrolled Mobutu's palace grounds."

From the "free world" to the Third World, from the Third World to the Soviet bloc, the U.S. government pushed the grain surpluses it had created in all corners of the globe. The 1972 Russian grain sale permanently changed the face of American agriculture. Prior to that year, the Soviet Union had suffered many grain shortages but had simply forced its population to do without. Growing consumerism and food riots forced the Kremlin to vastly increase its meat production in the early '70s, however, and this necessitated massive amounts of grain. (It takes between 7 and 13 pounds of grain fed to a cow to produce a single pound of beefsteak.) During most of the Cold War, the U.S. had refused to trade with the Soviets, but in 1972 detente changed the face of U.S.-Soviet relations and the trade doors swung wide open. And first on the Russians' list of purchases was more than 12 million tons of grain, more than one third of the total U.S. grain exports for that year. The chronic American agricultural surpluses of the post-World War II era were cleaned out in a matter of weeks, and the price of subsidized domestic grain began its unrelenting climb, carrying the prices of many other foods, especially meat, along with it.

Morgan does his best to convince us (and himself) that this Russian grain deal was a conspiracy of the large companies against the interests of the American people. He portrays Nixon's Agriculture secretary Earl Butz, whom he regards (comically) as another apostle of "free enterprise," as the villain behind the crisis. He gives pages of evidence in a pointless attempt to show that various bureaucrats in the USDA and even the CIA knew about the sale in advance and acted as part of the Nixon-Butz clique which was conspiring against the rest of us. He bemoans the fact that the grain companies made unprecedented profits during that year. Yet it does not seem to bother him that the same grain companies received almost $4 billion in price support subsidies between 1949 and 1972, all in taxpayers' money. The real problem was not the profit motive — it was a twenty-five year history of massive federal intervention which had created such a wasteful situation that the only way to liquidate the surplus was to hand it to the Russians at a giveaway price.

The interventionism has had other, arguably more disastrous effects as well. The "beneficent" (as Morgan sees it) American foreign policy of giving low cost surplus grain to friendly nations has left many small countries entirely dependent upon the American state for their food, as their own indigenous crops have been priced out of the market by U.S. and other governmental subsidies. The damage this has done to the economies of the Third World is nothing short of catastrophic. Since the end of World War II, our "humanitarian" donations of food have paralyzed the agricultural economies of the Third World. Instead of allowing a free market in food production and distribution, food producing nations have used government power to keep many Third World economies addicted to their own food exports. And what is most pathetic is that *no one* benefits from this relationship — neither the food importers nor the exporters. In recent years, even the heavily subsidized farmers have taken substantial losses as a result of the inefficiencies of the system.

Despite Morgan's excellence as an historian, his economic prejudices prevent him from finding a solution to any of the problems he sees so clearly. In fact, there is only one: total deregulation of agriculture, both in America and in the Third World. We must strip government of all power to control any segment of the food industry by abolishing the USDA and ending government food aid programs. We must stop using American foreign policy to force open overseas markets. We must end the massive research and development subsidies which support large agricultural interests. And we must abolish once and for all every conceivable price control mechanism at the government's disposal. Sooner or later, we will have little choice.

Michael Lipson is managing director of Students for a Libertarian Society.

Revisionist viewpoint

WILLIAM W. BEACH

The Politics of War, *by Walter Karp. Harper and Row, 380 pp., $15.00.*

FOR MOST OF THE TWENtieth century, the people who dominated historical thinking in America taught that William McKinley had brought the United States to the stature of a world power in order to defend the human rights of Cuban peasants and that Woodrow Wilson had guided Americans through their first European war in order to make the world safe for democracy. Their only opposition came from a fragile minority which taught a decidedly different history of the Spanish-American War and World War I. This minority viewed McKinley and Wilson as enemies of the American republic, of human rights, and of world peace. They argued that these men deliberately destroyed the republic in order to create a military super power, a power that left the world open for little else but war and maneuvering toward war. But bereft of political power, discounted by their peers, and often bewildered that the only support for their minority view came from the fringes of American politics, those of the second history taught with a pessimism and an attitude of tragedy that comes from sensing the truth in an age given wholly to promoting a falsehood.

The coming of the Vietnam War began to change this balance between the first and the second historians. Scholars and activists long accustomed to the historical underground quite suddenly found themselves among the leaders of the antiwar movement. They saw

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THE BETTMAN ARCHIVE

Woodrow Wilson, one of The Big Four at Versailles, "looked upon the U.S. as a stepping-stone to personal greatness, specifically his becoming the mediator of a European peace."

their essays increasingly taught in high schools and colleges and found unexpected praise for their arguments in the same media of leading opinion that in the past had castigated even their meekest caveats against American foreign policy. For a brief moment, the old republic of the era before McKinley and Wilson reasserted itself, went to the streets, and forced the leaders of both parties to abandon a foreign enterprise no different in substance from those that had destroyed the republic fifty years earlier.

The influence of this renaissance of republicanism has been felt in many areas of American life, but it has had its most striking effect in historical writing. The work of Gabriel Kolko, James Winestein, David Thelen, and many others since the mid-1960s has significantly altered the popular and professional understanding of domestic history during the Age of Reform. And in diplomatic history, a host of American historians inspired by the antiwar movement has overturned the traditional explanation of why the United States sought world power. Among the newest fruits of that renaissance is Walter Karp's brilliant essay, *The Politics of War: The Story of Two Wars Which Altered Forever the Political Life of the American Republic (1890-1920).*

While *The Politics of War* follows the pathbreaking research of Kolko, Winestein, Thelen, and the revisionists in diplomatic history, and is unmistakably what professional historians call "popular," the book is important in its own right. Its importance stems from Karp's largely justified contention that *The Politics of War* is the first of the new histories to tie developments in American foreign policy to related developments on the domestic scene. Even though priority in building this connection belongs to William Appleman Williams, the strength of Karp's claim flows from his focus on the relationship between national party politics and the emergence of bi-partisanship in foreign policy. It is on this connection that the whole of his argument turns.

How could the republic, Karp implicitly asks, born during the healthful interplay between civic humanism and eighteenth-century libertarianism, have produced the regnant mentality of international war which led ultimately to Vietnam and the scrupulous venality of the Johnson and Nixon years? He answers that these tragedies cannot be laid at the republic's door, and that they are instead the product of another political system which displaced the old republic during the critical years 1890 to 1920 (a point also made in Karp's excellent article "Republican Virtues" in the July, 1979, issue of *Harper's*).

Unfortunately, what Karp means by "the old republic" is not altogether clear. It appears that republicans were those people of both political parties who advocated economic opportunity free of monopolies and free of governmental regulations productive of monopolies. They viewed their government as a reflection of their own virtue and grew incensed at signs of corruption in high places. In foreign policy (Karp's main focus), republicans subscribed to George Washington's warning against foreign wars and entangling alliances leading to foreign wars. Thus they were non-interventionists who were cool to the power struggles in Europe and Asia. In sum, they were just the sort of constituency which would be least likely to support the government in its wars against Spain and against the Central Powers.

If, as Karp argues, most Americans were republican and held a view of American foreign policy which was inimical to foreign war, why then was there an American war in Cuba and the Philippines and later a decisive American involvement in the European theater of World War I? Karp sets out to answer this question by examining the crisis which developed in major party politics in America between 1890 and 1920.

He begins his story in midstream, when a significant portion of the American public had begun to support various efforts to rid the country of monopoly and corrupt governance. The most pronounced of these reforming efforts was housed in the People's Party. This agrarian-based (but by no means exclusively rural) reform party had begun to cut deeply into traditional Republican and Democratic constituencies by the early 1890s. Every sign indicated that the party's influence would grow rather than diminish. The acute depression of the 1890s and the efforts of American financiers to cut their losses by concen-

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trating American industry in fewer and fewer hands produced numerous protests of which the Populists' was the loudest.

The Populists drew their support from people who saw in the growth of monopoly power a force that decreased their own chances for economic advancement, that corrupted government by compelling legislatures to pass laws decreasing competition, and, in short, that threatened the political and economic life blood of the republic. Whether consciously or not, the American public was caught in a major revival of republicanism which closely paralleled the republican fervor of the Civil War. And this revival threatened the survival of the two political parties, most particularly the Republicans.

Since the end of the Civil War, the leadership of the Republican Party had grown closer to the economic and political interests which it had officially disdained before the War. It had further sacrificed its onetime advocacy of open government by nurturing the growth of political machines in the major industrial states. The party's strong anti-monopoly stance before the War had evaporated as it increasingly identified its own interests with those of big business. Corruption in state and national governments had become so frequent that Republicans had twice lost the presidency to Grover Cleveland, a politician whose rapid rise to high office was solely due to his unimpeachable integrity.

It is hardly surprising, then, that Republican leaders should have felt threatened by a growing movement that intended to destroy them as a party by destroying political machines and concentrations in business, and by checking the opportunities for using the power of government to the advantage of private interests. To turn aside what appeared to be a mortal danger, Republicans began a concerted effort to refocus public attention away from reform by diverting it toward "a larger policy." They found this "larger policy" in foreign war.

Karp's lucid exposition of how the "larger policy" ultimately stymied reform is at once edifying and unsettling. He skillfully tells the story of McKinley's Byzantine designs to maneuver the Congress and his administration into war with Spain over Cuba, and correctly notes that this war lacked even the semblance of popular support until the last moment, when it saddled the United States with an empire that permanently disrupted its tradition of noninterference in the affairs of foreign states. More importantly, the leadership of both parties came through the Spanish-American War to see these foreign adventures as a means of converting support for political reform into enthusiasm for war. In 1898, the parties barely succeeded in achieving this transformation of political fervor; but, as Karp argues, the political legacy of that "splendid little war" was nothing less than the discovery that the spirit of reform could in fact be vented in foreign conflict.

The full development of this discovery, however, awaited a greater conflict and a more daring leader—one able to direct the energy of both political parties in breaking forever the citizens' hesitancy to forfeit the republic for the greater glories of international power. That greater conflict was World War I; the more daring leader was Woodrow Wilson. The greater portion of *The Politics of War* concerns America's entry into the European conflict.

The background for America's second break with its republican past was similar to the background of its first break: Numerous reformers vigorously worked to arrest the growth of monopoly and divest the state of powers to advance private interest. The differences between the second round of reform and the first were essentially quantitative: more enthusiasm for reform, more people from all classes involved in reforming efforts, and more support for reform measures in the public media. Thus, the threat to the established parties was proportionally greater. Reform parties at the local and state levels overflowed by 1912 into a national Progressive Party that actually appeared capable of capturing the Republican Party and achieving the presidency.

"To turn aside the threat to their power, Republicans began a concerted effort to refocus public attention away from Populist reform by diverting it to the 'larger policy' of foreign war."

As Karp argues, the failure of the Progressives to keep their own best interests in mind—their decision to bolt the Republicans and form a third party which nominated Theodore Roosevelt, an early supporter of intervention in Cuba—enabled the Democrats to gain a presidential victory that otherwise would not have been theirs. But in late 1912, reformers believed that they had won their goal despite the failure of their party. The president-elect was Woodrow Wilson, a self-professed progressive whose political program, the "New Freedom," seemed to bode well for the fortunes of enlightened, republican change.

In 1910, before he saw high office as a means of attaining the national unity and glory he had praised in his famous history of the United States, Woodrow Wilson was an advocate of the traditional, Democratic principles — states-rights, laissez-faire, and minimal government. But after unexpectantly winning the presidency, Wilson became, in Karp's words, "the first American president to look upon the United States of America as a stepping-stone to personal greatness," more specifically, as a stepping stone to becoming the mediator of a European peace. "From autumn 1914 onward," he writes, "the diplomacy of the United States would be conducted by Wilson and House [Wilson's confidant and personal diplomat with Great Britain] not in the interest of America, not by the venerable traditions of the Republic, not by the nearly unanimous sentiments of the American people, not by the requirements of neutrality, not by the wish to avoid a horrendous war, but solely by the desire to secure by any means possible Wilson's opportunity to play 'the noblest part that has ever come to the son of man.'"

In pursuit of this goal, Wilson constantly increased his demands on Germany to allow American neutrals to travel safely on the Atlantic, even when Americans were traveling in armed passenger ships of Germany's enemies and even as Great Britain was systematically starving the German population through blockade. That Wilson's policy violated international law was of little importance to the President. He saw himself as creating a

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more important principle; and, besides, the rights of American neutrals was the only issue that could involve the United States in the European war. Without such involvement, Wilson's role as mediator would be small if it were possible at all.

Karp may be criticized for building his explanation of America's involvement in the war primarily on the foundation of Wilson's lust for glory and the aid that desire received from Congress. Karp's message, however, is that the other factors advancing America's belligerency would not have succeeded without the complicity of the President and the political parties. By involving the United States in the European war, the political parties were able to transfer the spirit of reform to a larger arena, the world, where reform became meaningless in terms of the American republic. That the war broke the enthusiasm for domestic reform is a matter of record; that jingoism and repression during and after the war destroyed the old republic remains a matter of speculation.

Karp might have gone far in settling this last point had he been a more diligent researcher and avoided the use of psychological and political inference. Karp's frequent references to McKinley's diary, for example, do not prevent him from resorting to speculation on what McKinley meant when McKinley's own private thoughts fail to advance Karp's argument. The same is true of Wilson. Karp makes extensive use of the House diaries to delve into the inner motives of the President. One must ask, however, what sort of evidence is that? Answer: The only sort that Karp could find, since Wilson was reluctant to reveal his thoughts even to himself. But, therein lies the essay's weakness.

Karp's psychological treatment of Wilson is reminiscent of Sigmund Freud and William Bullitt's *Thomas Woodrow Wilson: A Psychological Study*, a source from which he draws freely. Moreover, he adopts the questionable methodology of Freud and Bullitt: Where concrete evidence of a motive or action is lacking, the historian is justified in inferring explanatory evidence from psychological sources or, indeed, from any source available. This method, however, undercuts the connection between motive and act so crucial to Karp's argument. Except for the psychological evidence and certain fleeting remarks in the House diaries about Wilson's destiny, the same evidence used by Karp to tie American belligerency to Wilson's desire for immortality might be used to show that Wilson wanted war for the same reason as the Republican leadership in Congress—to destroy reform. In short, Karp lacks some of the evidentiary foundation necessary to make his argument fully credible.

I am tempted to say "all of this to one side" and conclude that the book's flaws are minute when compared to its accomplishments. That conclusion would be true. Nevertheless, *The Politics of War* must be read with a keen regard for proof. It will take other studies inspired by this essay to firmly establish Karp's argument. If it can be made to rest on a more solid foundation, however, it should bury forever the liberal political history of American foreign policy during the Age of Reform. Those who love peace and republican virtues would not be saddened by that history's passing.

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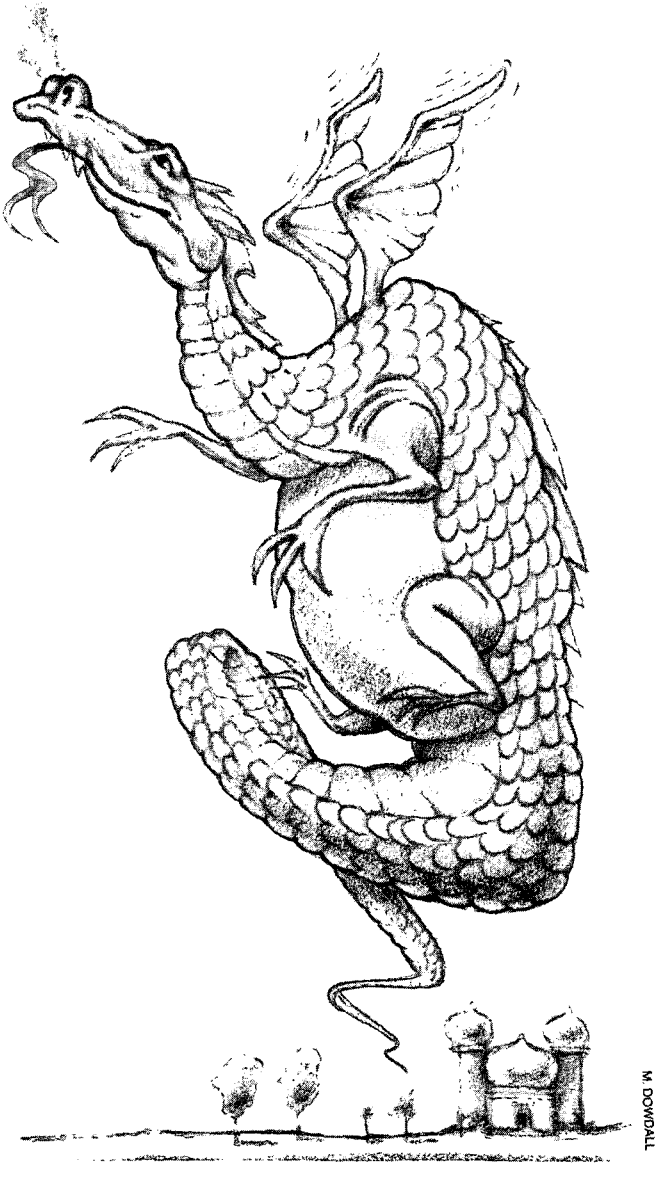
A mirror for observers

FREDERIC REYNOLDS

Tales of Neveryon, *by Samuel R. Delany. Bantam Books, 264 pp., $2.25.*

THE RECENT NOVELS of Samuel R. Delany fairly sparkle with libertarian insights. His most famous novel, *Dhalgren* (1975), is an exhaustive and challenging portrait of an anarchic society. *Triton* (1976) chronicles the fate of a quasi-libertarian colony in rebellion against totalitarian mother Earth. But Delany's approach to these themes is fully as unorthodox and individual as one would expect from an author whose major influences include Rimbaud, Levi-Strauss and Wittgenstein. The question of a free society is largely a dead letter in Delany's fiction, a question whose resolution is too obvious to require discussion. For Delany, apparently, it is much more rewarding to explore the more substantive questions of human nature and human potential which are a literary artist's true subject matter.

Tales of Neveryon, Delany's newest book, examines the forces of social change at work in a primitive society—the fictional land of Neveryon. And in doing so, it raises an important pair of questions: what



M. DOWDALL

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are the forces that shackle both individuals and cultures, and how do these forces relate to a particular society's political structure?

For an answer, Delany looks into areas left largely unexplored by libertarian writers: ritual, tradition, myth, custom, and language —the *formal* structures of human behavior. Viewing freedom and individualism as forms of behavior (just as slavery, violence, racism, and superstition are such forms) Delany inevitably involves himself in a search for a "science" of forms — a "modular calculus" as he calls it—that might explain how various patterns of behavior originate, perpetuate, and mutate. Delany is thus a kind of cartographer, mapping (in the phrase of scientist/philosopher Gregory Bateson), "the pattern that connects," a meta-pattern that will liberate the individual who grasps it.

Any artist in command of her or his medium will find the appropriate structure to communicate a specific theme. *Tales of Neveryon* is cast as a set of five separate tales, each tale located in a different part of Neveryon, each with its own story to tell. Yet all of the tales are linked, strangely and subtly, and discovering these linkages is one of the great reading pleasures of the book. Insignificant events in one tale take on the greatest importance in another; a single pattern of behavior is casual in one location, ritual in another, and purposeful in yet another. Delany's skill at weaving this dense, intricate tapestry is truly awesome.

Tales of Neveryon examines a culture in transition. The fictional land of Neveryon is moving, however hesitantly, from primitive barbarism to a more liberal, humane civilization. Commerce is on the rise, as monetary exchange slowly replaces barter. The institution of slavery is dying. Even the power of the aristocracy is revealed to be, quite literally, hollow.

Such profound cultural change necessarily implies equally profound changes in the individual, of course. In his autobiographical work, *Heavenly Breakfast* (1979), Delany writes of "the radical revisions going on in our model of the relation of human being to human being across each individual's personal political space: female to male, male to female, black to white, white to black, private individual to politicized group, or group to individual." These same winds of revision blow through Neveryon, moving differently (and at different speeds) among its various individuals and subcultures.

The entire process of change finds a metaphorical model in the second tale of Neveryon, "The Tale of Old Venn." Venn, an elderly wisewoman of an island fishing culture, often lectures to the children of the island. In one such lecture, she attempts to describe an important process by analogy: holding up a mirror to a written message, Venn points out that the mirror's image contains all the elements of the original image, *but with all values exactly reversed*. When a second mirror is positioned to reflect the image in the first, what is revealed is not a reflection of a reflection, but rather the back side of the original written message—a completely new value.

This mirroring is emblematic of Neveryon's relation to the reader. Several characters justly refer to their time as "brutal and barbaric," (and here Delany is playing with the reader's cultural chauvinism), but the inevitable comparisons to our own time can only give the reader pause. Similarly, a character named Raven incessantly refers to Neveryon as a "strange and terrible land." This melodramatic phrase is initially humorous, but slowly the humor dies. Neveryon *is* a strange and terrible land, fully as strange and terrible as our own.

The metaphor of the mirror is active at several levels in *Tales of Neveryon* but it is brought most forcefully to life later in "The Tale of Old Venn." A foreign trading vessel anchors in the island's harbor, its mission unknown. The ship, with its solitary strutting male and otherwise all female crew, terrifies the islanders. Afraid that their own female children will be kidnapped and impressed under what they take to be a powerful male captain, the islanders set fire to the ship, burning the entire crew alive. It is revealed much later in the book that the ship had come from a feminist society, that the female crew had been free women, and that the mysterious male was not a slave ship captain, but an ornament, akin to our own female mastheads. The foreigners had been murdered in error, through a confusion of image and reflection.

This forceful revaluing of values, this shattering of habit and cliche is typical of Delany's fiction. In *Tales of Neveryon* we see the various forms of social behavior (sex, money, power, the arts, commerce, even children's games) through the eyes of a spectrum of its participants (warrior, slave, aristocrat, freedom fighter, islander, urbanite, male and female, child and adult). Our valuations of Neveryon change as our perspectives change; our understanding is delimited by the actions and reactions, conceptions and misconceptions, of the players. A quotation by Gayatki Chakravorty Spivak prefaces the book: "If one is always bound by one's perspective, one can at least deliberately reverse perspectives, showing that the two terms of an opposition are merely accomplices of each other." Delany, one of the most important writers now working in this country, writes to free the individual from the limits of his or her perspectives.

But what is the fate of an individual once liberated from the chains of cliche? Delany hints at an answer in a last, superb metaphor. In his fifth and final tale, "The Tale of Dragons and Dreamers," we learn of the existence of a race of dragons. The great beasts are reputed to be pitiful anachronisms, kept alive by the whim of Neveryon's aristocracy. They are, it is said, incapable of flight beyond a few hundred yards, and they must land on a ledge if they are ever to fly again; were one to land in a forest, it would be incapable of regaining the sky, and would perish.

One such creature is kept as an aristocrat's pet, chained in a high tower of his castle. In the course of the tale the castle is stormed by two former slaves leading a general rebellion of slaves, and when the castle is liberated, so too is the dragon. One character remarks the beast's flight and comments that the dragon will have to land "in the swampy morass," so that "her wings will tear in the brambles and she will never fly again." Then Delany closes the book with the following paragraph: "But as if presenting the image of some ironic answer, the wings flapped against a sudden, high, unfelt breeze, and the beast, here shorn of all fables, rose and rose — for a while — under the night."

Surely this is a fair assessment of the chances for human freedom, human *potential*, in a land so strange and terrible, in times so brutal and barbaric, in a milieu so oddly like our own.

Frederic Reynolds is a freelance writer based in Fort Lauderdale.

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POLITICAL PIE FOR ALL!

MULTI-OPTION COMPETITION **WITHOUT** FRAGMENTATION

Structural Reform—Ballots by Richard A Morin could be the most important political book you'll ever read. The author focuses on contradictions usually overlooked by political analysts, and proposes a fundamental change that transcends ideologies. The reform concept is simple, yet implementation would have profound political repercussions.

Morin argues that the current ballot system (rather than money, special-interests and declining faith) is largely responsible for apathy, issue-avoidance, fragmentation, destructive in-fighting, and two-party dominance.

At issue is the cornerstone of current democratic systems—the primitive ballot formula of *One Man = One Vote.* The system drives stakes right into the political heart of our society, divides the electorate, induces polarities that can be manipulated, alienates voters and grants inordinate power to single-interest groups. It may have been a giant step out of authoritarianism and monarchism, but in a modern, complex, 20th-century democracy it fails miserably.

Under the current system, competition can be counterproductive. The "spoiler" role has grown out of the reality that the political pie cannot be shared—it can only be chopped up. Thus, competition can lead to a loss of majority rule.

- *In 1968, Richard Nixon was elected president with only 43.5% of the vote (Humphrey got 43%; Wallace, 13.5%).*

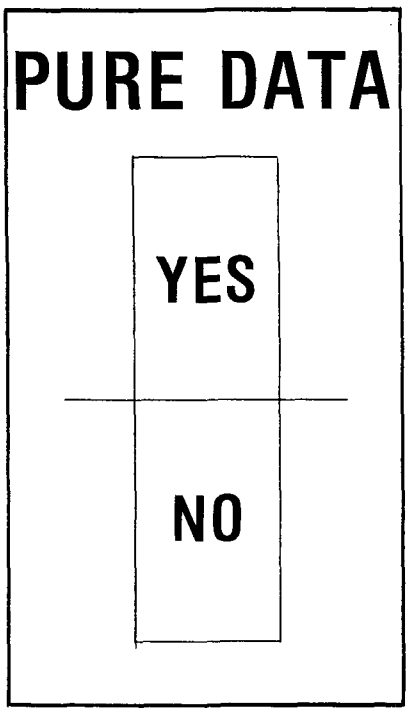
The current system can create "artificial" majorities, which can alienate real majorities and drive people away from the voting booth.

- *In 1977, five candidates representing the first choices of 61% of the voters in New York City's Democratic mayoral primary were thrown out. Koch and Cuomo (who polled 20% and 19 % respectively) were then given the exclusive right to compete in a comparative runoff.*

The current system functions to stifle healthy political debate of issues.

- *Because an ally (and not the opposition on issues) is more likely to tap into a candidate's support base, competition with a close ally is more threatening than that with a challenger having opposite views. When fields are crowded, it often becomes a strategic necessity to avoid issues and throw mud at friends.*

Structural Reform—Ballots presents a functional analysis of voting methods and the political consequences. Under the present system, a vote for one candidate is, in effect, a vote against each and every other contender. In reality, a voter may support more than one candidate. Plurality and runoff voting, and proposed preference systems, cannot fully measure voter support, do not make accurate candidate comparisons, and often mix support with comparative non-support. Political scientists who insist the problems of fragmentation and loss of majority are insurmountable are wrong—the problems stem from the data system, not from competition.



Political thinkers have made a gross error by focusing on voters (first choices or relative preferences) rather than on candidates (support or opposition). If the purpose of an election is to identify the candidate with the greatest political support, the ballot system *must* take a measure of support. Statistically, monitoring support is one of the simplest operations possible, and it eliminates all problems resulting from multiple options.

Morin demonstrates conclusively that binary voting (Direct Approval) is the only correct approach to balloting for political candidates. Direct Approval requires a new ballot formula—*One Person = One Vote (YES or NO) per Candidate Option.* In effect, the system would keep the entire electorate assembled for a separate show of hands for or against each contender.

The binary system is the only data sampling method that would treat each candidate as an independent variable, would directly record political support for candidates, and would allow accurate candidate comparisons. In terms of democratic and scientific validity, the methodological case for Direct Approval is *absolute*—and the implications of that fact are staggering.

But validity is not the only reason why Libertarians, progressives, idealists and thinkers of all persuasions should know about Direct Approval. The binary system would:

- Open doors for Third Parties and Independents while avoiding European-style splintering
- End the "spoiler" role that keeps support for alternatives to artificially low levels
- Change the nature of political competition from something divisive into something healthy and productive
- Accelerate the advent of political equality for women
- Guarantee election of any constituency's most wanted political option
- Help solidify a political center in every election.
- Make leading candidates immune to "stop" movements
- Improve the quality of political debate
- Eliminate the need for runoff elections
- Reduce in-fighting and issue-avoidance
- Prevent manipulations of election outcome
- Reduce apathy

Direct approval would allow each candidate, in a party primary, and each party in a general election, to stand on equal footing for the first time in history. Each would stand as an independent option, and each would be evaluated by the entire electorate. The system would record support overlap for similar options. No option would tap into another's support base, and no votes would be wasted.

- *How many Democrat and Republican voters may have identified with the views of Roger MacBride or Eugene McCarthy in 1976, but voted for Carter or Ford in the belief that an alternative vote would be wasted? We don't know. With direct approval we would know.*

Many world leaders agree that democracy is in serious trouble due to an inability to cope with serious problems that require unity. Binary voting would revolutionize democracy. It would expand our options, preserve majority rule, and unleash the democratic potential of our pluralistic society while enhancing cohesion. If you care about salvaging participatory democracy and protecting citizen control over government, if you want to understand the role of ballots and how the system affects candidate behavior and voter attitudes, you can't afford to pass up *Structural Reform—Ballots.*

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Richard Gere as the male prostitute and Lauren Hutton as the female john who saves him from a murder rap in *American Gigolo,* a superficial look at the hustler's world "which could set back the cause of high-priced call boys for years."

On View

Love me tender

DAVID BRUDNOY

LOVE IS A MANY-splendored thing. Without it, whether or not the birds would sing, you can be damn sure Hollywood wouldn't. In June, 'neath the movieland moon, let us spoon, then, you and I, while forty million giggly adolescents romanticize romance under the torrid gaze (on screen) of passionate lovers meeting, parting, and reuniting in 106 minutes give or take a popcorn break. What Lincoln and doctors and dogs are to literature, young love is to the movies: the eternally fecund, the always reliable, the utterly, alas, predictable.

But enough for a while of mundane plots, their infinite minute variations notwithstanding; on now, in the month of flowers, to some more adventuresome departures from the norm. Let us go *Cruising;* let us find us a sleek and frisky *American Gigolo;* but meanwhile, *Stay As You Are.* Each of these late winter releases has come before us with enormous advance expectation and each has generated considerable controversy. That none is particularly memorable as *film* says nothing, really, about their themes, though a great deal about their approaches to those themes. We are dealing here, respectively, with homosexual sadomasochism, with high-priced heterosexual hustling, and with May-December love joined perhaps to incest. Three movies for a jaded afternoon, if afternoons themselves, and not just those enduring them, can be jaded.

Stay As You Are is the product of one Alberto Lattuada, who directed and, with Enrico Oldoini, wrote the screenplay for Marcello Mastroianni's profile. (If I had the space I'd work in something here on *Saturn 3,* which is of the outer-space genre but which really offers something else entirely: the promise of everlasting luck for oldsters with outrageously attractive young ladies — in this case Kirk Douglas, wasting away as must all of us, and Farrah Fawcett, in whose hair and teeth and poster-perfect bod there originates a hundred million masturbatory fantasies. Kirk and Farrah live together in cuddly bliss on one of Saturn's moons, doing scientific things to plants, the better to feed earthlings. One such, played by Harvey Keitel, comes and gums up the works. But *Saturn 3* is so unspeakably boring—to see it is to loathe it—that we'd best race back to the Italian film. *Stay As*

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You Are promises roughly the same lovely hope to older men, but for all that it too is ludicrous, it is at least interestingly so). Mastroianni plays Giulio, some sort of landscape architect. He lives wonderfully well; he has a playful daughter and an edgy though lovely wife; and he is consumed by lust for one Francesca, a college student with a yen for older men. Francesca is played by Nastassia Kinski, daughter of Klaus Kinski (*Nosferatu, the Vampyre*). Giulio has reason early on to believe that Francesca is his own daughter — reason but not proof. Circumstantial evidence, shall we say; and throughout the film's 95 minutes (which happen to seem like 95 hours) the poor man is torn every which way but loose, tormented by the very likely prospect that he is not only an old lecher but also a violator of the central taboo of Western civilization; in a word, incestuous.

The film spares us only the race through the dozen cities — we get only three (Rome, Florence, and Madrid) plus some bucolic side-trips—but indulges our taste for every other cinematic convention attending these things: we have the pigeons and the scenic strolls, the disappearances and petulances, and, for the most prolonged ten minutes I can remember, a frolic in the bed, around the bed, and nearly under the bed, the better to provide us with every conceivable perspective of Miss Kinski's truly astounding shape, and occasional glimpses of what remains of the once lush Mastroianni shape too. *Stay As You Are* throws the incest bit at us continuously but never does anything with it except let us know that to Francesca "father" means the nice man who raised her, and to Giulio "father" may be Giulio but golly that girl's good to be with. Lattuada (whose other work, if there is other work, I don't know) appears capable of dealing only with superficials, but he is, admittedly, at home with them. The fifty-five-year-old Mastroianni can rise to great material (think of his recent *A Special Day,* with Sophia Loren) but with junk he can only look pained — beautifully, maturely pained, but not interested. Yearning replaces concern in his face, but who wouldn't be able to present a look of desire when the object of desire is as remarkable as Nastassia Kinski? Kinski may or may not have some dramatic ability; here she is called upon only to look desirable, put out, and healthy. It must not have taxed her abilities to do all three.

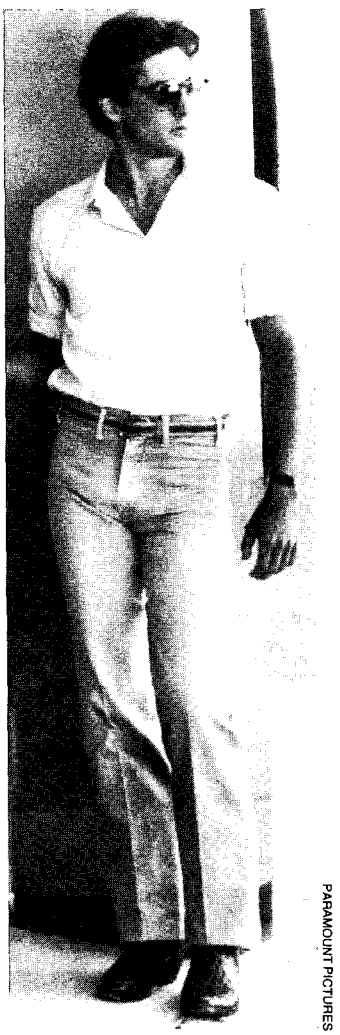
So *Stay As You Are* stays just where it began, with an aging man, a honey of a young lady, a potentially bothersome complication, and a lot of over-ripe photography. Look elsewhere for something provocative about incest, for example, to Bernardo Bertolucci's *Luna. Stay As You Are,* by the way, was produced by Giovanni Bertolucci, Bernardo's cousin.

American Gigolo, written and directed by Paul Schrader, was originally to have featured Richard Gere (*Yanks, Days of Heaven, Bloodbrothers, Looking For Mr. Goodbar*), but then John Travolta turned to gold with *Saturday Night Fever* and the part was taken from Gere and given to Travolta. But after *Moment By Moment,* a disaster starring Lily Tomlin as an older lady who collapses into heat when pursued by Travolta, the lead role in *Gigolo* was abandoned fast by Travolta, and Gere got a second chance at it and leapt. This new heartache kid, cover boy last year of *American Film* and this February of *Rolling Stone,* will likely rise to the stardom his cult expects, though not owing to *American Gigolo,* a movie which could set back the cause of high-priced call boys for years.

It is something of a rage just now, this newly discussable phenomenon of heterosexual male prostitution. *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* played with it years ago, but the temper of the times required that poor Mrs. Stone had to die for her sins, or whatever purchasing men for sex is. Now we have the experience tossed about as casually as a pick-up salad, in books by the score, in let-me-tell-you-about-Burt-and-me revelations on the tube, in (God help us) real life. So Julian Kay (Gere) not only gets the woman who bought him (Michelle, played by Lauren Hutton, a model who now is called an actress); he is also saved from a bum rap for murder, by her love. The plot goes like so: he tries to pick her up; she resists; then she comes and offers him money; they screw; they come to like each other; he becomes the prime suspect and soon the accused in a kinky killing; she lies for him; and presumably they live ever after admiring him. Save for the last bit, which is as close to a *Deus ex machina* as hip contemporary films are likely to find, *Gigolo*'s is a plot that is wide open to dozens of intriguing developments. Schrader has chosen the one that goes the least beneath the surface, that actually seems to flee from depth as Dracula flees from garlic. Who would make us care about a hustler must first create a hustler about whom one can, without retreating to gawky silliness, deeply care. Because hustlers, like hookers, exist for one purpose only—to be used—to *care* for one ruins the fun, making the purchaser ludicrous and the purchased one nervous.

Schrader had a problem finding a way to transcend the dead-end of the hustler-purchaser relationship without losing the novelty of precisely that commerciality, so uncommon on screen. He began to solve it by casting people whom we would like to look at, and went a bit further by going easy on the beddie-bye routines and devoting some time to watching Julian Kay do his thing. But then the creator of *American Gigolo* either got cold feet and decided that if we liked this guy we'd hate ourselves, or else he just ran out of ideas.

Julian thinking? We suppose that he does, but we *know* that he keeps tony books around the flat. Julian permitting himself a moment of reflection on his future? Probably the fellow wonders how long he'll be kept in Mercedes cars and swell threads, but we see only that he has dozens of shirts—Gatsby threw his on the bed to impress Daisy;



PARAMOUNT PICTURES

"Gere is the new heartache kid who will likely rise to the stardom his cult expects."

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shirts are useful to make a point — and a king-size closet full of suits, and designer jeans, and the ideal form to set them off. Julian recoiling, if only for a moment, from his job? Julian does announce, several times, that he doesn't do "fag stuff" and that he prefers to downplay the kinky, and he even saunters through a gay bar looking for a nasty black man and later sneers at the black man's taste for blond boys. But Julian never reaches into himself to pluck out a fully-developed idea. What passes through his mind are impressions (as impressions become the totality of our understanding of him), and attitudes, and a dawning awareness that he's in trouble. Julian's may be one of the longest dawning awarenesses in modern film: it is obvious to a child, any child, that Julian is being set up, but Julian realizes the fact only after an agonizingly pointed series of brutal hints are handed to him.

Julian Kay is a man who preps for his job by working out, who does his job with skill and charm, and who disappears, utterly, from our consciousness when he's out of sight. He does not appear to *exist,* and Michelle is even less tangible. Julian and Michelle are abstractions. And abstractions that do not rise even to the level of concepts are like smoke: move and the air's clear again. Abstractions, moreover, that don't partake even of some suggestion of concreteness, that don't ever quite become individuals, leave us tired, irritable, even repelled. How fortunate for John Travolta that he didn't follow up his empty beach bum role with that so eagerly snapped up by Richard Gere. Julian is pretty, but Gere, I hope, will never again be tempted to let his own beauty dominate his acting skill. Maybe nobody could have made more of Julian, under Schrader's direction, than Gere. But Gere makes nothing of Julian, nothing at all. Another missed opportunity to explore an unusual side of life in a movie.

Of the *Cruising* controversy enough has been said by every critic, by every movie exhibitor, and by every gay protestor demanding, either before seeing the movie or after, that the movie be banned—enough has been said that we can dispense with that matter here in a paragraph. The protestors feared that *Cruising* would increase the violence against homosexuals in a society that sometimes almost ennobles violence against homosexuals. They worried that its picture of an especially grim side of homosexual life would become *the* public image of homosexual life, thus further retarding the progress toward legal acceptance, much less social acceptance. They may have held their breath while *La Cage Aux Folles* became a phenomenally successful film, and some fretted that *its* image, benign fruitiness, was a distortion, too. But nobody with an ounce of humor in his being could fail to enjoy *La Cage,* whereas, as it happened, hardly anybody could help but be horrified by *Cruising.*

In *Cruising,* New York's finest respond to a wave of horrid killings of homosexuals by assigning a young patrolman (Al Pacino) to undercover work. He is to merge into the leather bar "scene" in the city, since he looks like some of the victims, and try to find the killer. He does just that. And at the end of the movie he has, perhaps, become more than professionally adept at passing for homosexual; he may have become homosexual. And he may have become a killer. He may have. He may not have. Toss a coin. Billy Friedkin tosses out a few hints, suggests that anything's possible, and leaves it at that.

Now as a mystery story *Cruising* is poor: we soon know who the killer is, and we are force-fed an inedible diet of sand-box psychologizing to help us understand him (he also may or may not be homosexual; the may or may nots in this film come by the dozens). And as a sensitive portrait of a young policeman who may (sorry) be discovering, to his horror, a previously unrealized aspect of his personality, *Cruising* also lets us down. Patrolman Burns (Pacino) might well have "turned gay" during the course of his unenviable assignment prowling the S & M bars down by the riverside. We have, however, no real reason to think so, other than some snappy editing. Pacino does not turn in a poor performance—not here, not in any of his major films. He may have melodramatic roles (... *And Justice For All*) but he always lends the richness of his kinetic presence even to lesser parts. As the *Cruising* cop he has stocked up on anguish and generously shares most of it with us. The acting is generally good: by Paul Sorvino as Burns's superior, by Don Scardino as the only genuinely pleasant homosexual in the film, by Richard Cox as the killer. The script, however, is a mess, possibly because it is chained too closely to Gerald Walker's silly 1970 book, possibly also because Friedkin couldn't, or wouldn't, sustain any of its more intriguing sub-themes long enough, or contemplate and actualize any of them deeply enough, to give more than a fly-by to them.

But one thing stands out in *Cruising,* the one thing that ought to have provided context for plot development but instead becomes in effect the most memorable aspect of the film. *Cruising* shows, with what I believe is precision, just what those bars, those patrons, those explicit sex activities, are. I don't mean that we *see* "penetration," as it's called when a movie receives the dreaded or coveted X rating — *Cruising* is R-rated—but we are shown, as no other film has ever shown to the general public, a real, if to most people repugnant, slice of homosexual life.

This, and not the hypothetical incitements to slaughter on Main Street, this, and not the media-hyped socially unhappy results of exposure to this film, is the real strength, or let us call it force, of the movie. *Cruising* is not the breakthrough that gay people and supporters of gay people have hoped for, not the *Rubyfruit Jungle* or *Front Runner* that cannot find financing, not the film to create a cheerful "role model" for the contemporary American homosexual. Instead, *Cruising,* a film that is at bottom merely a fairly standard sensationalizing film about brutality (albeit brutality set in a rarely shown milieu), leaves *one* impression. You cannot see such places and such people, in such abundance, in so many visions of a Hell on earth, without remembering what you have seen. For a very long time. I have never been inside a place like those shown in *Cruising,* but I have been outside them and I have been told, long before *Cruising* appeared, what goes on inside. When I saw the movie I *knew* what I would see because long ago people I trust described such places to me. Billy Friedkin has recreated reality better, I imagine, than others have done when trying to show what singles bars are like, or what other manifestations of present day life at the fringes are like.

This, then, is what some who have seen the film are *really* bothered by. Not the potentialities—who but an idiot would assume that most homosexuals live like the leather boys in *Cruising?*

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UNITED ARTISTS

Al Pacino in *Cruising*, which "shows a real, if to most people repugnant, slice of homosexual life, an indelible, stupefyingly awful image that could become the trump card in the hand of those who want to crush homosexuals."

Who but those already determined to go queerbashing would derive any added encouragement from this movie? Who but a killer would kill anybody because he saw a movie featuring a killer? — but the reality: those who ideologize homosexual life, who combat the haters (who live in their own fantasy world in which every homosexual is a beast) with their own rhetoric of fantasy, cannot abide the fact that this expensive, troubling movie tells us not of pleasant Bruce and Bill down the block, but of hundreds, thousands, of presumably mature men who live their night lives in costumes, sodomizing each other with their fists, urinating on one another, degrading each other in plain view of hundreds, thousands, of their clones, of hundreds, thousands, of men who have come out of the closet armed to the teeth with whips and chains and cock-rings and leather masks and policemen's uniforms and who, drinking and smoking and inhaling this or that drug or stimulant, pass the night humiliating each other and themselves.

Cruising tells us an unattractive truth. None but a demagogue would leap from this vision to the conclusion that Such Is Gay Life in America Today. But the demagogues are legion, the New Right needs its scapegoat, Jews and Negroes now having lost that special something that made them such ideal scapegoats until just yesterday, the homosexuals, who dare to demand—*demand!*—from the collectivists what only libertarians would willingly grant, providing now just the ticket. Ironically, the cinematic worth of *Cruising* is precisely its societal danger: by describing, by depicting, by obliging viewers to see and see and see again and again, until the picture is indelible, a stupefyingly awful thing—a gift that only superior movies, or movies with some superiority within them, can bestow — *Cruising* becomes the trump card in the hand of those who want to crush homosexuals.

Incest without seduction is a statistical rarity; expensive gigolos are usually discreet and are certainly not very promising as material for hate-mongers to use to awaken a sleeping America from its "permissiveness." And while *Stay As You Are* and *American Gigolo* touch on hush-hush themes, they only dip delicate fingers into their subjects. But *Cruising* lets a wildcat out of the bag. It fails as an exploration of psychology but, undoubtedly unintentionally, it succeeds brilliantly as exposé. I would be very surprised if more than one homosexual in a thousand has the slightest attraction to the world *Cruising* depicts, but then, how many Jews demanded a pound of gentile flesh? And how useful *that* image was to people longing for an added ingredient to perk up tired old "Christ-killer." ❑

LR's film critic writes about the movies for "The Boston Herald American" and reviews movies and plays on WHDH-AM and WNAC-TV (CBS) in Boston; he is also the host of talk programs on both stations, writes a thrice-weekly newspaper column, and serves as Deputy Sheriff of Middlesex County (Massachusetts).

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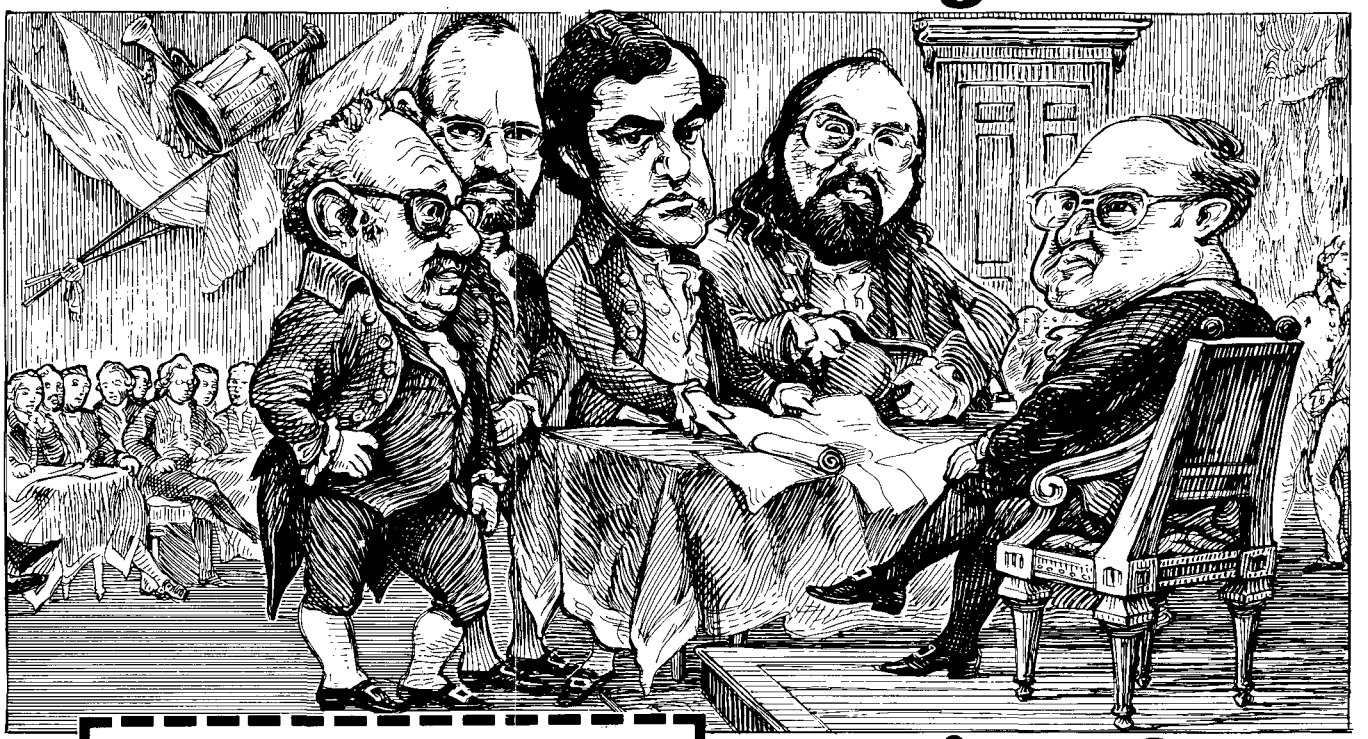

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